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Coming Soon: Reagan's Second Recession

EDWARD LUTTWAK ON STANSFIELD TURNER • PATRICIA MEYER SPACKS ON EDUCATING WOMEN

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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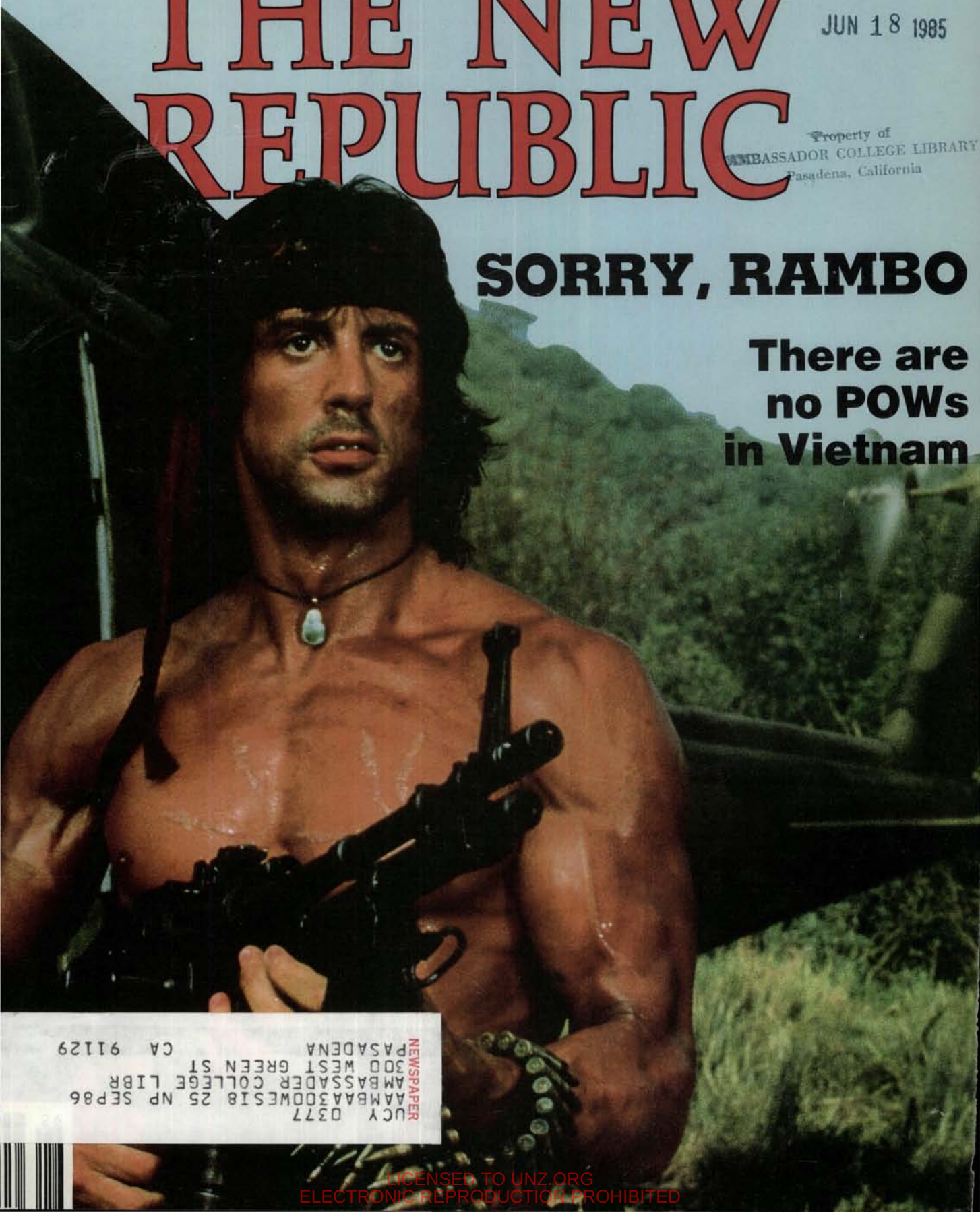

SORRY, RAMBO

There are no POWs in Vietnam

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CORRESPONDENCE

BAG THE BELTS

To the editors:
TRB's analysis favoring mandatory seat belt laws (or automatic seat belts) over air bags ("Serfdom and Seat Belts," June 3) is based on the premise that seat belts are as effective as air bags. They are not.

The Office of Technology Assessment and other equally reliable sources estimate that if all cars were equipped with air bags as many as 12,000 occupant deaths would be prevented each year. This is twice the number of lives that would be saved if everyone buckled up. The reason for the difference is that air bags are far more effective than seat belts in front-end collisions (which account for 60 percent of all occupant fatalities). Seat belts do not, for example, prevent a driver from striking his or her head on the steering column, whereas air bags do. Head injuries are the single most important cause of auto occupant fatalities.

Air bags are automatic. The population most at risk in car crashes is teenagers and young adults. Unfortunately, they are the age group least likely to buckle up. If our society really does care about our young people as we say we do, we'll make an investment in automatic protection for them.

ROBERT R. TIERNAN
Washington, D.C.

FOOL OF IT

To the editors:
To be really effective, a "hatchet piece" such as Tina Rosenberg's "Fool of Ships" (June 3) article on Navy Secretary John Lehman should demonstrate some semblance of objectivity.

As a friend of John Lehman of more than a dozen years who was interviewed for this story, but, of course, not quoted, I was pleased to see that the author went so far overboard in trying to make Lehman appear as a villain.

Because of the extreme bias displayed in this article, even those readers who do not know John Lehman personally or are not aware of his outstanding abilities will readily recognize the malice aforethought that characterizes this article.

Ms. Rosenberg obviously has serious reservations about Lehman's goal of a 600-ship Navy and the utility of aircraft carriers. But public debate would have been far better served in the pages of TNR by serious discussion of these issues than by accusations against Lehman such as having "wrecked careers, snookered Congress, and lied to his bosses."

If you can't make your arguments without maligning someone whom the author herself described as "one of the most effective" secretaries of the Navy, then perhaps the weakness is in the arguments, and not in the character of a person who holds differing views.

MORRIS J. AMITAY
Washington, D.C.

LIBERATE ILLITERATES

To the editors:
David Harman's hostile review of Jonathan Kozol's superb *Illiterate America* ("Teaching Johnny to Read," May 27) did little justice to it. Harman, himself a researcher in education, sees great complexities in the problem of literacy in America and takes Kozol solemnly to task for his "simplistic exposition of the troublesome dilemma of illiteracy" and the "sophomoric nature" of his solutions. But Kozol's book is a parti pris, a call to arms—not a dry monograph replete with standard deviations. Harman declares that "technical reading skills, literacy, and functional literacy each develop best in different settings." If so, what does this leave us in the public schools except "the teaching of mechanical reading skills"?

Kozol sees skill in reading and writing as the empowerment of our citizenry. He would have adult literacy programs make use of controversial books and other materials. Literacy therefore would not simply fit the individual like a cog in our vast corporate machine; it would be a process of spiritual liberation, a concomitant of serious, critical thought.

To this end, Kozol advocates a national mobilization of committed literacy volunteers. It's a revolutionary approach designed to capture the imagination of the young. Harman, like many of his colleagues in professional education, balks at this sort of action.

What the teaching profession needs desperately is the informed passion of committed teachers. Such a cadre of teachers will not be forthcoming unless teacher education in this country is radically improved. I suspect that Kozol has irritated Harman by his stinging critique and subsequent dismissal of professional educationists. As Harman has noted, Kozol makes precious little reference to the "literature" of professional education. We may praise the Lord!

RICHARD R. LUSSIER
Beaufort, South Carolina

NICARAGUAN FANTASY

To the editors:
Bernard Aronson's analysis of U.S. policy alternatives in Nicaragua ("Another Choice in Nicaragua," May 27) begins with a faulty analogy and ends with a contradictory conclusion. Aronson argues that the same type of centrist-oriented policy we followed in El Salvador could be duplicated in Nicaragua. But Aronson forgets that in the former case, the government was the recipient of our military assistance; consequently, the U.S. possessed sufficient leverage to move El Salvador to the center. In Nicaragua, our aid goes to a rebel opposition with dubious prospects of military success.

Furthermore, Aronson claims that a "regional security" treaty would be unenforceable, since neither the Contadora nations nor the U.S. will intervene militarily in the event of Sandinista violations. But if Aronson believes the Sandinistas can be certain that America will never intervene in the region militarily, how does he think they can be pressured into fulfilling the goals of "democratic pluralism, a mixed economy, and genuine nonalignment"?

The answer, presumably, lies in our ability to make life difficult for the Sandinista regime through our support for the *contras*. Yet Aronson fails to address what should be the central focus of his analysis: Do the *contras* have any chance of military success? My suspicion is that they do not. Supporters of the *contras*, from Aronson to the Reagan administration, have completely failed to prove otherwise. Wholesale support of *contras* will only result in military obligations to a losing cause. Aronson's faith that U.S. aid to 15,000 rebel *contras* will produce the same results as aid to a majority government in El Salvador is simply untenable.

NATHAN SIEGEL
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

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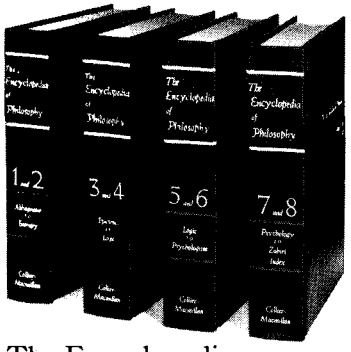

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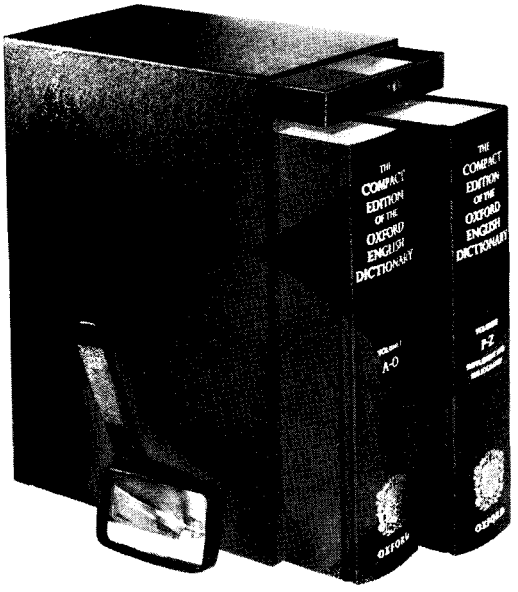

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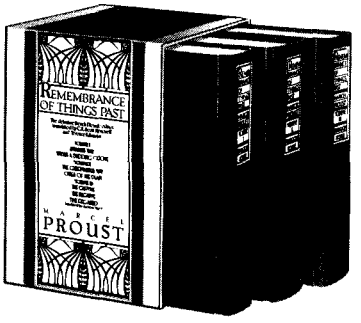

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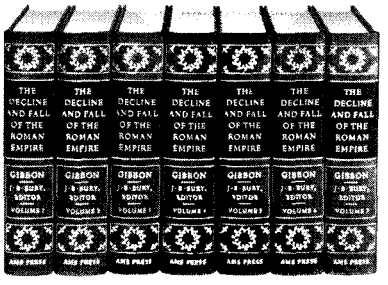

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FROM WASHINGTON

LAME DUCK SOUP

He looks like a lame duck, and he quacks like a lame duck, so is he a lame duck? This is the question that excites all of Washington (meaning about three dozen people). What is the explanation for President Reagan's failure to go from strength to strength following his overwhelming reelection last November? Suddenly he is losing legislative battles, coming under attack from unexpected quarters, stumbling, backing down.

The official diagnosis blames Reagan's ailments on a mysterious dynamic seemingly built into the American political system. Our old colleague Morton Kondracke, writing from his exalted perch as Washington bureau chief of *Newsweek*, cites "a new conventional wisdom: that second-term presidents are afflicted with a kind of political Alzheimer's disease, a progressive and incurable loss of potency leading sooner or later to terminal lame duckery."

I have a simpler explanation for Reagan's second-term troubles: ideological hubris. Ever since the election, Reagan and his advisers have been off on a right-wing bender, arrogantly assuming the country was with them. On issue after issue, this assumption turns out to be wrong. America just isn't as conservative as the Reaganites hoped and others feared.

The president's defenders say the problem isn't the country. They say it's the press and Congress, which have forgotten who won in November. But even some of Reagan's friends complain that he ran a "feel good" campaign instead of using the election to establish a mandate for completing the Reagan revolution. This assumes, of course, that such a mandate was available. I doubt it. Perhaps nothing he did could have lost Reagan the election. But a campaign based on military overthrow of the Nicaraguan government, abandonment of Salt II, cutting Amtrak and student loans, and so on, would have cost him his landslide.

Just before the election, Peter Hart Associates polled Reagan voters about how they would like their votes to be interpreted. Eighty-four percent said their votes should be interpreted to mean support for Reagan's economic policies (i.e., prosperity). Barely half wanted their votes interpreted to mean support for more increases in defense spending, for more cuts in domestic spending, or for opposition to abortion and the Equal Rights Amendment.

The military budget has gone up by half in real terms over the past five years. Cap Weinberger thought the public's appetite for defense spending was unlimited, and unaffected by the growing evidence that much of the money is being wasted. He was wrong. The defense spending spree is over, but that isn't "lame duckery."

Reagan spent his first term tacitly observing the unratified Salt II treaty. This year, egged on by Weinberger and others, he was heading toward an intentional violation of the treaty's limit on multiwarhead missiles by retaining an old Poseidon nuclear submarine when a new Trident sub is launched this summer. Unlike some arguable Soviet violations of ancillary parts of the treaty, this would have been a clear breach of the treaty's central provision. Furthermore, retaining the old Poseidon served no military purpose. The idea was breach for the sake of breach: a purely symbolic bellicose gesture and snub at arms control. But no one except a small band of zealots is interested in stagy nuclear bellicosity. Congress, the allies, even the Joint Chiefs of Staff all expressed their dismay, and Reagan backed off.

In his first term, Reagan kept his designs on Nicaragua carefully ambiguous. Now he openly demands that the Sandinistas "say uncle." But a recent *New York Times*/CBS poll shows that Americans are almost two-to-one against helping to overthrow the Sandinistas, and more than two-to-one against military aid to the *contras*. After an initial defeat, it looks as if Congress will cough up some "humanitarian" aid. If there's anything more humiliating than Reagan's resort to the charade

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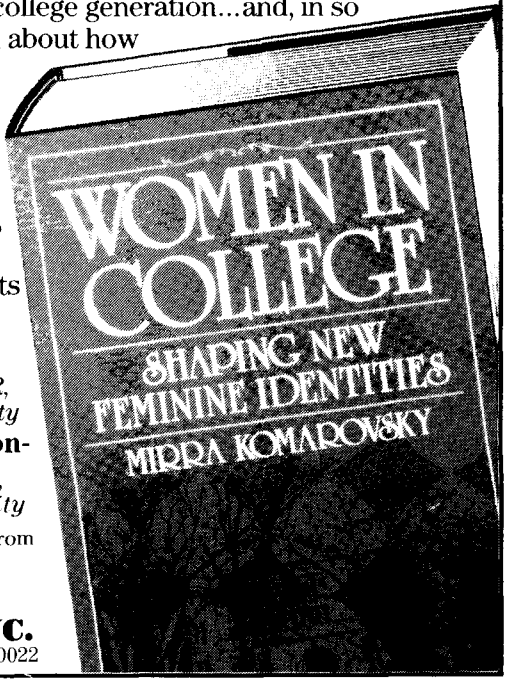

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COVER Sylvester Stallone as Rambo. Photo courtesy of Tri-Star Pictures.

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DEMOCRACY IN NICARAGUA

On the day that the U.S. Senate voted to provide $38 million in "non-military" aid to Nicaraguan rebels, the foreign minister of Canada was in Managua to seal a deal with the Sandinistas worth $11 million, assistance designed to help Nicaragua develop its geothermal power. But this deal sustains Sandinista geopolitical power as well. The failure of the Reagan administration to persuade even the Conservative government in Ottawa of the importance of our interdict against Marxist-Leninists in Central America is symptomatic of our more general failure among our major allies, who treat American concern over Nicaragua as an overwrought obsession.

Where the administration has failed most is in its effort to persuade the Congress and the American people. The public opinion polls on Nicaragua these days should be a lesson in humility to the Great Communicator.

Nonetheless, the White House is claiming the Senate vote as a victory. As the House passes comparable legislation, the jubilation will be boundless. Such a victory in Congress would not be entirely hollow. It would give Reagan something of what he wants, and probably enough finagling room to finesse actually getting even more, through various exercises of executive discretion bordering on deceit. But it is a humiliating victory nonetheless. Circumscribed by restrictions and caveats, the legislation is intended to appear to repudiate the president's goal, which is to change the government in Managua by force of U.S.-supplied rebel arms and U.S.-trained rebels.

At the same time the "humanitarian package" provides those of his critics who voted "aye" with protective cover from the charge that they did nothing to stop the spread of Communism in our hemisphere. Yet no one will be able to accuse them of being prepared to risk what President Reagan wants us to risk. How statesmanlike. This aid legislation, then, is an expression of the hypocrisy in American politics that disguises itself as compromise.

The Senate did decisively reject three amendments—one each by Senators Kennedy, Hart, and Biden—flatly ruling out the American military option (which Reagan says he rules out anyway). For this rejection, *The Boston Globe* has stigmatized the upper house as "the blank-check Senate." What the defeat of those amendments actually demonstrates is that even politicians who don't share President Reagan's pugnacious stand are not quite willing to endorse the illusions about the Sandinistas to which his critics, against the heavy weight of evidence, insist on clinging. These illusions now even carry the dubious cachet of McGeorge Bundy, who recently took to *The New York Times* Op-Ed page to argue against aiding the rebels, citing as analogies a variety of past disasters, many of which he himself was responsible for.

No doubt inadvertently, Senator Chris Dodd has defined the issue clearly. He says that if a foreign (that is, Soviet) military base were to be established in Nicaragua, this would be an occasion requiring U.S. intervention. But such a policy virtually guarantees a confrontation with the Soviet Union. Is it not far less risky, far less threatening to the peace of the world, to pressure the Nicaraguans now in power to reach a compromise on sharing that power with Nicaraguan democrats who would never entertain the notion of a Russian military base in the first place?

After all, it is not our opposition that has led the Sandi-

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nista regime to embrace the Soviets, to subvert its neighbors, or to start down the road to tyranny. There is hardly any doubt that if the United States had been indifferent to what was happening in Nicaragua, the oppression now would be far harsher and the military buildup would be far more threatening to the peace of the region. If the Soviets and the Cubans now seem to be moving cautiously in Nicaragua, this is because they fear a clash with the U.S. To that extent, at least, Reagan's policy has been a success. The Sandinistas and their allies were more confidently provocative when the Carter administration gave them reason to think that "anything goes."

DIFFICULT as it is for many Americans to imagine, some revolutionaries are ruthless and aggressive out of true conviction. They do not require the inspiration of American hostility. There is no reason to think that the reversal or withdrawal of our hostility will change them. Why should it? On the contrary, the only hope for democracy in Nicaragua is to support those Nicaraguans who demand it.

It does not follow that a U.S. invasion is a morally or politically justifiable response to the consolidation of such a tyranny as we now find in Sandinista Nicaragua. Every calculus, in fact, argues against it, including the calculus of our own military leaders, who do not want to fight the war that would have to be fought. Still, that does not relieve us of responsibilities to the democratic resistance movement that has formed in Nicaragua and among Nicaraguan refugees and exiles.

President Reagan has confused this issue with his hyperbolic claims for some of those he proposes to help. To be credible and deserving, an insurgency against tyrants must itself be democratic, at least where there is the democratic option. The appellation "*contras*," as in counterrevolutionaries, is an instance of semantic subversion that unjustly tars many in the resistance who fought bravely against the previous dictatorship. Their present struggle merits more than this historically inappropriate and dismissive nomenclature or the callous advice from friends of the Sandinista regime that they content themselves with resettlement anywhere but at home.

A genuinely democratic strategy for Nicaragua would make the democrats in the resistance the keystone of our policy. To this end, it would require U.S. efforts to reduce the sway of ex-Somocistas among the rebels. Then we would be able to support the resistance with a clear conscience, without which free societies are badly hobbled when engaged in difficult and otherwise ambiguous enterprises.

Our goal should be to convince the Sandinistas that they will pay a high cost for not compromising with decent democrats like Arturo Cruz, Alfonso Rubelo, Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, and Eden Pastora. If we do not support these decent democrats in their struggle for justice, let's not pretend that it's so that the Sandinistas will come to democracy on their own. We will be turning our backs on deserving friends just for the sake of a quiet life.

WHY TO COMPLY

SALT II was a modest achievement, to say the least. The two signatories, while generally abiding by its provisions, each have accused the other of conducting the largest military buildup in the history of mankind over the last five years. The Soviet accusation is much less true. But in any case, the treaty has not limited either side at all. Since the SALT II negotiations were completed in 1979 the United States has added about 2,000 nuclear warheads to its arsenal; the Soviets have added about 4,000. Yet only in 1985 does the United States bump up against a SALT II limit. When we launch our next Trident submarine with 24 multiple-warhead missiles, we will have to remove from service a Poseidon submarine equipped with 16 such missiles.

Reagan apparently has seen the wisdom of two propositions—one general, one specific—that he has long denounced. The general proposition is that the Nixon, Ford, and Carter administrations did not negotiate SALT II as a favor to the Soviet Union. They negotiated it because it promised a marginal improvement in the security of the United States. The specific proposition shows why. The treaty imposes real constraints on the Soviet Union. The Soviets have not reached the ceiling of 1,200 MIRVed launchers, which the United States is now constrained by. But they have long since reached SALT II's total ceiling of 2,400 land-based missiles, submarine-launched missiles, and intercontinental bombers. Even the Reagan administration acknowledges that the Soviets have been dismantling old weapons as they deploy new ones in order to stay under this limit. Indeed SALT II called for lowering this ceiling to 2,250 by 1981. Ironically, because the United States is far short of the 2,250 limit, President Reagan could obtain a unilateral reduction in Soviet arms simply by ratifying SALT II. Short of that, his decision to continue abiding by the provisions of the unratified treaty is unusually sensible.

CARTOON BY BEN SARGENT

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NOTEBOOK

□ DOWN THE MEMORY HOLE: Columnist James J. Kilpatrick recently denounced critics of William Bradford Reynolds, President Reagan's nominee to be associate attorney general. These critics, he said, "do not truly believe in equal rights or in an end to discrimination. Theirs is the Orwellian doctrine that some are more equal than others. In their curious vision, it is wrong to discriminate against blacks, but it is not wrong to discriminate against whites." What's truly Orwellian is for James J. Kilpatrick to pose as a defender of equal rights. As editor of the *Richmond News Leader*, in the late 1950s, Kilpatrick made his name defending Jim Crow laws. Indeed, in a TV debate with Martin Luther King Jr. on November 26, 1960, he suggested that the notion of equal rights for blacks and whites subverted civilization itself: "We believe it is an affirmatively good thing to preserve the predominately racial characteristics that have contributed to Western civilization over the past 2,000 years," he said, "and we do not believe that the way to preserve them lies in fostering any intimate race mixing by which these principles and characteristics inevitably must be destroyed. Toward that end we believe in public policies that promote separation of the races in those few essential social areas where intimate personal association, long continued, would foster a breakdown, especially among young people, of those ethnic lines that seem to us important."

□ THE WAY THE WORLD WORKS: Representative Jack Kemp caught a lot of heat in mid-May when he restored to his tax-reform bill two generous tax subsidies for oil and gas interests. Kemp, who had previously denounced tax preferences for big business, told *The Wall Street Journal* on June 5, "I talked and listened and debated and was persuaded. I didn't cave." Here's how Jude Wanniski, a former *Wall Street Journal* editorial writer and a key Kemp adviser, describes what happened: In the spring of 1984, the oil and gas lobby led by the Independent Petroleum Association of America (IPAA) was "shocked" that the tax-reform plan cosponsored by Kemp and Wisconsin senator Robert Kasten failed to include the tax breaks they had enjoyed for years. Wanniski, by the way, has been a consultant on retainer for the IPAA since 1978; he declines to say how much he earns from the lobby. "My first involvement was to get the IPAA people together with John Mueller [Kemp's top aide on tax issues]," Wanniski explains. There were two or three meetings between Mueller and petroleum lobbyists in the summer of 1984 but Mueller remained unpersuaded. In November the Treasury Department released its original tax simplification plan—which also eliminated the oil and gas loopholes. "That's when the IPAA people really started sweating." Wanniski says that the oil and gas lobbyists grew even more scared after a high Treasury Department official "practically threw them out of his office" when they came to ask that the loopholes be restored. So the IPAA went back to Kemp. "I talked to some IPAA people and said they should send an oilman to talk to Kemp's staff, somebody with grease under his fingernails." A wildcatter was imported from Michigan, several more meetings ensued, and finally Mueller agreed that tax breaks for the oil and gas industry were economically essential. Kemp, in turn, changed his bill and attracted a lot of attention. Meanwhile, in revising its proposal the Treasury Department restored one of the tax breaks by granting partial tax credit for so-called intangible drilling costs. At this point Wanniski says that Vice President Bush feared Kemp would get all the credit for the restored tax break. So Bush, Wanniski claims, intervened at the last minute to restore full tax credit for intangible drilling costs in Reagan's tax proposal. Result: Bush and Kemp curried favor with a powerful special interest group that will be influential in 1988 Republican presidential politics, and the oil lobby protected its government handout.

□ THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: Our colleague Fred Barnes noted in last week's Washington Diarist that in Washington "brilliant" is no compliment: it's a synonym for grating and controversial. The opposite of "brilliant" in Washington-speak is "thoughtful." Former representative Barber Conable was awarded this encomium in a sycophantic profile June 6 by Dennis Farney of *The Wall Street Journal*. Conable "isn't an ideologue, hasn't any special interest axes to grind, and has made a lifetime habit of looking farther down the road than the typical politician." Thoughtful, in other words, means devoid of all ideas and convictions, except for the chin-pulling axiom that there are no easy answers. "Nuances. They remain important to Barber Conable, even if they seem out of favor in a Washington currently preoccupied with simplifying many things." Guess what? Conable is totally opposed to tax reform: "Most of the complexities were put there for equitable reasons," he thoughtfully opines.

□ A FINAL POSSIBILITY: James Rosenthal argues on page 15 that in all likelihood there are no American prisoners of war still being held in Vietnam. Rosenthal's mustering of the available evidence is compelling. Still, there is one possibility that the available evidence doesn't address: the Hanoi regime may simply have lied, and to no purpose—just to be cruel. That is exactly what happened during the recent negotiations for an exchange of prisoners between Israel and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command. For months Ahmed Jibril denied that his guerrilla army was holding Hezi Shai, an Israeli soldier captured in Lebanon on June 11, 1982. Finally, just before the actual exchange, the Palestinian terrorist organization admitted that in fact it did have Shai in captivity. There is no reason to think that the Vietnamese government is any less callous about such things than the Popular Front.

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□ HOW DID THIS MAN GET HIS JOB? The American Enterprise Institute is holding a reception in Washington this week for the special adviser to Habib Bourguiba, the president of Tunisia. This adviser has served as chairman of Tunisia's development bank, has held three ambassadorships, and is a member of his party's politburo. His name? Habib Bourguiba Jr.

□ MEDLEY'S PERSPECTIVE: In a recent luncheon at TNR's offices we heard from J. William Medley, author of the syndicated column "Conventional Wisdom," whose thoughtful collection "The Bipartisan Imperative" will be published this fall. "The abstract goals of tax reform must be balanced against the concrete needs of our free enterprise system. While our tax system does have perceived inequities, we must remember that it has also been an essential cog in the mighty engine of American economic growth for several decades. Ideologues may prefer sweeping solutions, but tinkering is the American way. Tinkering can transform a divisive and political controversy like tax reform into a worthwhile and practical solution that meets the needs of all Americans—a group that, after all, includes our so-called special interests. Washington observers now recognize that the president's tax-reform plan, while worthy and important, needs congressional fine-tuning."

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

BROKEN DEFENSE

THE LATEST juicy tale of Washington intrigue has it that last month Donald Regan, the White House chief of staff, prevented Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger from pleading directly with President Reagan for at least three percent real growth in defense spending. It's not quite true, but Weinberger isn't likely to play up the real story. From his standpoint, the true version is worse, for it shows how his influence with Reagan has plummeted.

The call from Weinberger came on May 9 while Reagan, near the end of his European trip, was attending a black-tie dinner at the Ajuda Palace in Lisbon hosted by Portuguese president Antonio Eanes. Weinberger was desperate to keep Reagan from agreeing with Senate Republicans on a fresh budget package that would allow defense spending to rise next year only to match inflation—in other words, zero real growth. Rather than drag the president to the phone, Regan took the call. "Do you want to get through to the president or do you want me to relay your message?" asked Regan. "Oh, you can relay it," said Weinberger. Regan, in turn, advised Reagan of Weinberger's unsurprising position. And the president rejected it in favor of a no-growth military spending in 1986. This was surprising.

Yet Reagan was only bowing to reality. Last year the coalition for continuing Reagan's military buildup was robust and thriving. Even a few months ago it was alive and seemingly well. Now it's all but shattered. Look at the numbers. In the Reagan budget unveiled in early 1984, military spending was projected at $350 billion for 1986. By March 1984 the White House had agreed to pare it to $325 billion. Then, in the 1986 budget proposed in January, the president asked for $314 billion, or 5.9 percent in real growth. In April this was slashed to $302 billion, or three percent. Last month, when the Senate passed its budget resolution, military spending dipped to $294 billion—zero real growth. And Reagan will be lucky to get this, since the House budget resolution calls for a flat freeze, without even a modest boost to account for inflation.

Why the swift collapse? The easy answer is to note the shift in public opinion. When Reagan came to office in 1981, a *New York Times* poll found that 61 percent of adult Americans supported an increase in military expenditures; in the *Times* poll last February, the number had dwindled to 16 percent. The Gallup Poll has produced a similar finding: in 1981, only 15 percent thought too much was being spent on defense; in 1985, 46 percent thought so (another 36 percent said the level of spending was just about right).

But the numbers beg the larger question. What caused the shift in public opinion? The answer is who, not what. In large measure, Reagan and Weinberger themselves are responsible; they are victims of their own success. They succeeded in getting funds for a massive buildup in Reagan's first term. Real growth in military spending soared 12.7 percent in 1981, 12.2 percent in 1982, 7.6 percent in 1983, 4.4 percent in 1984, and 5.9 percent this year. That's big bucks, the spending of which gave the public the idea, rightly or wrongly, that the United States was catching up with the Soviets in military strength. Three months after Reagan was inaugurated, an ABC News poll found that 41 percent of Americans thought the Soviets had a military edge and 36 percent saw the two powers as even. Four years later, 55 percent said a military standoff had been reached and only 22 percent rated the Soviets as ahead.

In addition to believing that parity had been restored, folks got another, slightly contradictory idea about defense spending—namely, that money was being routinely squandered. Starting two years ago, a cycle of stories began to appear in the daily press about waste, fraud, and abuse in the Pentagon—$7,622 coffeepots, $748 pliers, $640 toilet seats, $44 light bulbs, plus millions and millions in overcharges by defense contractors like General Dynamics and General Electric. Weinberger, who saw liberal critics exploiting the issue to attack his buildup, was painfully slow to react. By the time he took strong steps—in May he harshly punished three Navy officers for allegedly spending $600 on an ashtray—he was accused of casting about for scapegoats.

HE SHOULD have known better. It's not a new phenomenon for tales of waste to draw extraordinary attention once a boom in military spending is well under way. In the Vietnam War era, a young Democratic repre-

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sentative, Les Aspin, made his name peddling waste stories to the press. Aspin is now chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. After spending lagged in the mid-1970s, waste stories fell out of vogue. "You couldn't sell a waste story in '79 and '80," Aspin said. "You couldn't buy your way into the paper with one." Last year Aspin checked to see when the first of the overpriced coffeepots had been purchased. It was 1978, during the Carter administration. Back then, it wasn't pursued, Aspin says, because, "It would be unpatriotic. It would be like kicking a guy who's down."

In the mid-1980s, persistent stories of waste confirmed the public's worst fears about Pentagon spending. "Everybody always believed there was waste at the Pentagon and this only proved it," says Republican Senator William Cohen of Maine. Another Republican senator, Charles Grassley of Iowa, has made himself nationally known (and probably assured his reelection next year as well) through his attacks on waste at Reagan's Pentagon.

For years conservatives scored many political points attacking liberals for a purported lack of concern over waste, fraud, and abuse in welfare spending. As a result, social spending itself was largely discredited, and the public, though wary of eliminating social programs, blocked their rapid growth. In much the same way, all Pentagon spending has been discredited by the current round of waste stories, and the public is balking at further growth. Overpriced toilet seats are to conservatives in the 1980s what misspent food stamps were to liberals of the 1970s: a political disaster.

REAGAN has been no more effective than Weinberger in counteracting the sting of Pentagon waste stories. He had a few throwaway lines in his nationally televised budget address on April 24—"Men who illegally line their pockets with dollars the American people have contributed to our defense are stealing from the arsenal of democracy the very weapons our young men need to defend freedom"—but these didn't help. And White House aides fret over the administration's ties to defense contractors. "We don't have any obligation to defend white-collar criminals who are ripping off the defense budget," growls a senior official. "We ought to distance ourselves from them."

Reagan has also put himself in what one aide calls a "hellacious dilemma" by pursuing arms talks with the Soviets and seeking summit with Mikhail Gorbachev at the same time he wants to prolong his military buildup. Reagan sees no inconsistency, believing the buildup is needed to force the Soviets to negotiate serious arms reductions. But by forgoing assaults on the Soviets as the "focus of evil," he may have made them appear less demonic, and thus less the goad to greater defense expenditures. When a Soviet soldier shot Major Arthur Nicholson in East Berlin in March, Reagan stifled his instinct to lash out. The shooting, he told reporters, only made him "more anxious" for a summit meeting with Gorbachev. It was left to Weinberger to voice sharp criticism of the Soviets over the shooting.

Inadvertently, Reagan has also made defense spending a ripe target for deficit reduction. "Once you declare war on the deficit and say you don't want to cut entitlements or raise revenues, it's almost inevitable that you will turn to defense," Cohen argues. And Aspin says that the move to trim defense spending "started with the deficit and was driven by the toilet seats. When it was clear there would be no revenue increase, people began doing back-of-the-envelope calculations." To really reduce the deficit, they had to lop off some of the military buildup.

ODDLY ENOUGH, the chief loppers have been Senate Republicans, including Majority Leader Bob Dole and Budget Committee Chairman Pete Domenici. Both have long since lost patience with Weinberger's insistence that any cuts in defense would jeopardize national security. They were infuriated when, after telling them that zero real growth would hamstring the nation's defense, Weinberger suddenly found another four billion dollars in extra funds. "I think he'd have more respect if he'd at least level with the leadership," Dole grouses. "A lot of Senate Republicans have been disaffected," says GOP Senator Warren Rudman of New Hampshire. "Cap misjudged. There are times to put on the table and times to hold back. This was not a time to hold back."

And Weinberger could no longer rely on Senator John Tower, who as chairman of the Armed Services Committee played a pivotal role in winning funds for the buildup. Tower retired last year and is now one of Reagan's arms negotiators. His successor, Senator Barry Goldwater, is cranky and erratic, and thus a shaky ally in protecting spending plans. Still, had Weinberger been more flexible, negotiating instead of demanding, he might have gotten the three percent real growth he coveted, at least in the Senate. In any case, by paring the defense budget to zero real growth, Senate Republicans have made it easier politically for House Democrats to back deep cuts. "We don't have to run uphill," says Aspin.

The collapse of the defense coalition has caused repercussions at the White House, none to Weinberger's benefit. Aides dismiss rumors that he is being forced out, but they are quick to poke holes in his arguments for more spending. Senior officials mockingly point out that the Senate's proposed drop from $350 billion to $294 billion in 1986 military spending is achieved without curtailing a single major weapons program. The president too is less beholden to Weinberger. A year ago Weinberger's advice was golden. This year Reagan rejected his initial request for nine percent real growth, later halved the 5.9 percent hike in a compromise with Senate Republicans, then agreed to have no real growth at all. And he sided with Secretary of State George Shultz over Weinberger in committing the administration to continue compliance with the unratified SALT II treaty.

The irony in the crumbling of the defense buildup coalition is that it might have been averted if Walter Mondale had been elected president. Mondale, remember, called for real growth of about four percent a year in defense spending, this being roughly the Democratic position in

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1984. He would have been hard put to renege, notably because Republicans would have attacked him mercilessly as an appeaser and as wimpy on defense. "Mondale would have fallen on his sword to get four percent," says Aspin. "If he had even breathed less than four percent, Republicans would have been all over him. If he'd settled for less, his presidency would have been over." With Reagan, it's different. He's imbued with the same kind of impunity that President Richard Nixon, the old anticommunist, had when he went to China in 1972. It's all the same, whether military spending is six percent or three percent or zero or even less. The Gipper, his hand on the trigger, still stands tall against the world in the public eye.

FRED BARNES

POSTCARD LOS ANGELES

SLEAZE FACTOR

ONE OF THE SLEAZY aspects of New York City is the hawking of lottery tickets from every street corner. California was too clean for that, I always figured. So last November, when an initiative to establish a lottery here appeared on our ballot, I signed up with the campaign against it. I opposed the lottery for moral reasons. This position was a little difficult to maintain since our organization received most of its money from horse racetrack owners worried that the lottery would cut into their handle. Polls showed that "the moral argument" was a big loser anyway. So were all the other arguments. The lottery starts this fall.

But the sleaze has already begun. The NAACP and the Urban League immediately threatened to boycott the lottery unless 30 percent of the contracts were set aside for minorities, on the apparent theory that because blacks blow lots of money on lotteries, it's only fair that they be fleeced by minority contractors. A second bill would have given preference in the selection of ticket sellers to nonprofit organizations, citing as potential beneficiaries the California Parapsychology Foundation, the Affirmation of Gay and Lesbian Mormons, the Bay Area Association of Black Insurance Brokers, and the Weed Historic Lumbertown Museum.

One legislator spoke up against all these special preferences, arguing they would discriminate against . . . well, against dwarfs, who he said would be the ideal lottery vendors. And the horse-racing industry, having just spent three million dollars in a futile effort to stop the "Eastern gambling promoters," now volunteered that it was "uniquely qualified" to sell tickets, and suggested a joint advertising program.

Meanwhile the first lottery contract, worth $30 million to $40 million, has just gone to the sole bidder, Scientific Games, Inc., a subsidiary of Bally Manufacturing Corp., the world's largest maker of slot machines. Not coincidentally, Bally lawyers wrote the lottery initiative and bankrolled the campaign to pass it. Their law required that lottery contractors reveal the income tax returns of all owners, officers, and directors—something that Bally happened to have done already to get a license for its casino in New Jersey, but an apparently insurmountable obstacle for its competitors. This was a nice bit of post-Watergate legal work, turning the appeal of openness and "full disclosure" into a device for closing off competition.

The irony is that much of the fear that organized crime will infiltrate the lottery—ostensibly the reason for the tax disclosures—stems from Bally's own presence in the industry. In 1980 the New Jersey Casino Control Commission required Bally's founder and chairman, William O'Donnell, to leave the company after finding that he had been a partner with organized crime fronts and had tried to bribe the Kentucky legislature. Bally is now supposedly clean. It's as if John DeLorean, claiming he wanted to prevent drug abuse in the auto industry, wrote a law requiring that all carmakers show they had been acquitted of cocaine dealing. Some legislators tried to relax the disclosure requirements to encourage competition, but Democrats in the State Assembly tacked on the controversial 30 percent minority set-aside clause, alienating Republicans and effectively killing the change (which needed two-thirds approval). This caused speculation that Democratic Assembly Speaker Willie Brown was in cahoots with Bally, which had put at least $14,500 into his campaign fund.

IT IS an insult to Willie Brown to think he can be bought for under $20,000. Brown is a brilliant man, and a riveting orator (remember "Give Me Back My Delegation" at the 1972 Democratic Convention?). But his leadership has contributed to the moral decay of politics in this state. Unlike previous speakers, Brown has maintained his private law practice, sometimes representing clients before local government agencies whose funding he helps set. His practice has flourished, and his example has apparently created an atmosphere in which it is considered O.K. to get rich in office, where almost any bill can be passed if you've "got the juice."

Even endorsements in official Democratic Party mailings have been put up for sale. In 1982, for example, the party decided not to take a stand on a ballot initiative to require deposits on soda and beer bottles. But Jeff Rabin of *The Sacramento Bee* reported that after Brown received $30,000 from opponents of the bottle bill, a party mailing went out urging voters to reject the initiative. So bankrupt are the Democrats under Brown that he and other party leaders are actually talking of making Republican Governor George Deukmejian's alleged delay of the lottery their main issue in next year's election. On less vital issues like education, crime, welfare reform, environmentalism, and taxes, the Democrats have little to sell.

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There's hope, though, in the form of a juicy scandal bubbling out here: the Moriarty affair. W. Patrick Moriarty was an Orange County businessman with interests in fireworks manufacturing, real estate, gambling clubs, and toxic waste disposal (a potent combination). He apparently sought to influence legislators with laundered contributions and prostitutes supplied at parties in a Beverly Hills penthouse. He has now pleaded guilty and is singing to prosecutors. *The Los Angeles Times*, not exactly a scandal-mongering newspaper, has already named Brown's top lieutenant, Assembly Majority Leader Mike Roos, as one of those who enjoyed the services of what a Moriarty aide called "my soiled doves."

WASHINGTON should have policy debates like the recent one between Hugh Hefner, *Playboy*'s founder and chief cocksperson, and movie director Peter Bogdanovich. In March Hefner held a press conference to announce that he'd had a stroke because of Bogdanovich's book *The Killing of the Unicorn*, which tries to blame Hefner and his philosophy for the 1980 murder of Playmate of the Year Dorothy Stratten by her estranged husband (while she was having an affair with Bogdanovich). Bogdanovich then charged that Hefner really had his stroke when he learned of an amicus curiae brief filed in support of an Indianapolis anti-pornography ordinance by Stratten's estate. Hefner then accused Bogdanovich of molesting Stratten's sister, who then sued.

This sort of Hollywood cat fight is usually designed not to shed light but to build up the gate, like a weigh-in before a championship fight. Applied to politics the technique might go a long way toward reviving public interest in the governance of the Republic. It prompted me, for example, to read Bogdanovich's book, which is a rather curious feminist tract, depending as it does on a certain amount of lewd interest to pull the reader along. (The press release for the book leads with a paragraph talking about the differing sizes of Stratten's breasts.) And then there is Bogdanovich's recollection that, two days before Stratten's murder, he "had a surprise for her: We were preparing another movie to shoot very soon, and she had the leading female role." Nice surprise, honey—but didn't Stratten get some say in these matters? With feminists like this, who needs *Playboy*?

Meanwhile, an anti-porn law similar to one recently passed in Indianapolis was just rejected by Los Angeles County, despite Bogdanovich's testimony on its behalf. It would have banned "graphic sexually explicit subordination of women" through pictures or words in which women "are presented dehumanized as sexual objects," among other things. Supporters of this sort of law, notably its authors, Andrea Dworkin and Catherine MacKinnon, are eager to distinguish it from anti-*obscenity* laws, which are "concerned with morality." In contrast, "pornography is a political practice." I don't understand this distinction. If dehumanizing women is a political practice, surely we object to it for moral reasons—i.e., because it is an evil practice. Though feminists are right to redefine what is smutty about smut (not sex but sexism), I suspect their anti-porn arguments otherwise have more in common with the Religious Right's communitarian moralism than they would care to admit. But maybe they've seen polls showing that "the moral argument" is a loser on this issue too.

MICKEY KAUS

Why Britain produces thugs.

WOGS AND LOUTS

Oxford

IN "VIOLENT" Britain, plagued with soccer hooliganism, one of the more peaceful spots for a summer Saturday afternoon picnic is the bank of the River Thames where it winds through the Oxfordshire countryside. Those who dare to risk contact with the "savage" natives may sit among the rushes and the willows on the edge of Oxford itself where town meets gown, where the privileged students of the great university celebrate their graduation by lolling in flat-bottomed boats drinking champagne, and where the less privileged city workers look on, swigging bottles of beer, sitting out the summer until the start of the next soccer season.

As Auberon Waugh wrote in a recent issue of *The Spectator* devoted to "England's humiliation" at the Brussels soccer match during which Liverpool fans knocked over a wall onto rival Italians, and 38 people were killed: "We have always known there were two Britains, one extraordinarily mild and pleasant, inhabited by mild, tolerant kindly people, the other utterly disgusting, inhabited by brutal, malevolent louts." When the "louts" go on the rampage, as they have done periodically since the Crusades, first in blood-lust campaigns in India and Africa, and nowadays in soccer stadiums at home and abroad, the world, particularly the New World, looks on. It is no longer transfixed by fear, but by stunned amazement that this green and pleasant land is not full of gentlefolk spreading civility throughout the world.

By way of attempted explanation of this event I would like to start on a recent Saturday afternoon on the banks of the River Thames at Oxford. You knew, from the pop of the champagne corks and the occasional belch from a beery belly, that the two divided Britains were there. Suddenly a rowing eight whisked into view, swishing down the middle of the river, its coach barking orders from a bicycle on the towpath. Behind the eight, buffeted in its wash, came a two-man canoe whose occupants were gamely struggling to keep pace. Provoked by a deafening bellow from the coach's megaphone, the person in the front of the canoe shouted, "Why do you have to speak

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with an American accent?" There was no doubt about the accent, nor now about the "lout" in the front of the canoe. He spoke with a local Oxfordshire accent, not the polished English of an undergraduate.

"Yeah," said the second person in the canoe, "why don't you bugger off back to America?"

To which the coach replied, "Oh, come on, you guys, this is such a great day, why don't you just relax and enjoy?"

"How can I enjoy myself while listening to an American accent?" one of the canoeists retorted.

"Well, what would you like me to do," pleaded the coach, "kill myself?"

"Yeah," came a thunderous roar of approval, not just from the canoe, but from everyone, "louts" and students alike, many previously unseen, on the river bank. A student, who had been drinking champagne, was so taken by the suggestion that the American coach should liquidate himself that he rose up cheering from his flat-bottomed boat, lost his balance, and fell into the river.

And all this because the coach was American? Surely not. He could have been speaking French, German, Italian, or Japanese and been equally rejected as a Frog, a Kraut, a Spick, or a Nip. (John Bull, returning from foreign wars, introduced that now universally derogatory word Wogs to embrace anyone who was not a white cherry-cheeked Briton, and any attempt to eradicate the term from the lexicon has failed.) Thus reminded of Britain's rampant and boundless xenophobia, I began to find it the most satisfactory way to make sense of the riot in Brussels.

Most of the causes proposed by a host of pop psychologists and sociologists to explain soccer hooliganism have proved too linear—the absence of chairs at British football stadiums, alcoholism, the inherent dissatisfaction of fans because too few goals are scored in soccer, or the frustration and violence the game breeds because it is played only with the feet in a manually oriented "manufacturing" world (yes, Michael Novak of the American Enterprise Institute, writing in *The Washington Post*, suggested that). Others are just plain wrong. The fans who riot and kill do not do so because they are unemployed and have nothing else left. As it turns out, among British fans there appears to be a direct relationship between violence and affluence. The most violent are from upper-working-class, semi-affluent backgrounds, dress smartly for their bloody rituals, and have been known to leave gold-embossed, vellum calling cards on their victims. One gang has such a card saying, "Nothing Personal—You Have Been Serviced by the Anti-Personnel Firm."

EVERY COUNTRY has its share of xenophobes (the French first gave the word real meaning), but Britain, with its extensive former empire, has been more vigorously and thoroughly xenophobic than any other. Xenophobia here has often been summoned up by ruling-class jingoism, amply demonstrated in 1914 and 1915 for the Great War. Ultimately, though, xenophobia knows no class barrier, and as postwar Britain sank into a decline, it was recalled into service for the Korean War and various and sundry colonial detachments.

Suddenly, in 1982, Britain suffered the ultimate humiliation when it failed to prevent the Argentines from walking onto the Falklands. All but a handful of Britons supported Mrs. Thatcher's wildly successful military response—the kind that imperial dreams are made of—but not without a certain social and psychological cost that is only now being paid. As Eric Hobsbawn, the British historian, wrote at the time, "The forces sent to the Falklands were a mini-museum of everything which could give the Union Jack particular resonance—the Guards, the new technological strong men, the SAS, the paras; all were represented down to those little old Gurkhas. They weren't necessarily needed but you had to have them just because this was, as it were, a recreation of something like the old Imperial durbars, or the procession at the death or coronation of British sovereigns."

In Britain today, racked as it is by "deindustrialization," by the destruction of once-proud centers of manufacturing, each with its own regional and cultural identity—and its own soccer team—large chunks of the lower and middle classes have lost their social identities, and many have been set adrift in sterile, depressing "new towns."

It would be wrong to blame the roots of this demise on Thatcherism. After all, each British leader since 1945 has failed to come to grips with the deep-seated social and economic problems linked to the "end of empire." Nevertheless, it is true that these people, robbed of their past societal anchors, are under constant pressure. And this pressure springs, as Jeremy Seabrook wrote in *The Guardian* recently, "from the homogenising influences of that foreign 'enterprise culture' of the USA that Mrs. Thatcher is so anxious we should emulate, even though it means the dissolution of our own culture—means that people will cling more tenaciously to anything that offers a promise of continuity and stability; hence the much-commented 'tribalism' of football."

One thing left is to be British, to create and adhere to a lunatic code of self-esteem, and, of course, to keep foreigners out and intimidate them abroad. This insidious code applies, and manifests itself still, in the growing race-hatred in the towns and cities of Britain. It also emerges from small vicious gangs at football matches in foreign lands, where fans see themselves first and foremost as British. "Keep the Falklands British" declared a Liverpool fan's T-shirt at the Brussels game.

Thus if one decides to disturb the tranquillity of the English countryside on a balmy summer afternoon by talking too loudly, one had better speak with an English accent. The penalty could be severe. And what, I hear my island-bound compatriots demanding, is uncivilized about that?

PETER PRINGLE

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Real-life Rambos have no one to rescue.

THE MYTH OF THE LOST POWS

BY JAMES ROSENTHAL

TEN YEARS after America's withdrawal from Vietnam, President Reagan has made the recovery of 2,477 American soldiers "the highest national priority." In June 1983 a division of the Defense Intelligence Agency was assigned a large full-time staff to collect and evaluate information about POWs and MIAs. Last summer Reagan signed a proclamation designating the third Friday in July as the annual National POW/MIA Recognition Day. A Congressional Task Force on POW/MIAs in Southeast Asia was created in 1977, and in the last several years Congress has introduced more than 100 bills and resolutions aimed at resolving the problem. A number of celebrities, including William Shatner, Gloria Vanderbilt, and Willie Mays, have been promoting public awareness of the issue in books, movies, and fund-raising drives. John LeBoutillier, a former representative from New York, is working with Charlton Heston in a national phone solicitation campaign to drum up money to help the "American POWs kept in bamboo cages, in the jungle, or in caves in the mountains." As a government official recently told *The New York Times*, "Somehow the mystery of their disappearance and their deaths have taken on a peculiar life of their own."

The popular usage of the term "MIA" is misleading, since it suggests that we have no idea what happened to the soldiers in Vietnam. We do. At the end of the war, the Pentagon listed fewer than 800 soldiers as either prisoners or missing in action. After the war, the Pentagon added to the list servicemen considered killed in action but whose bodies were never recovered. Many of these were Air Force pilots: 81 percent of those now classified as MIAs were pilots, many of whom failed to eject from their planes before crashing in the Vietnamese jungle. (Since 1975 the Vietnamese have returned the remains of about 100 MIAs.)

In fact, of the 2,477 men categorized as MIA, nearly half (1,186) are known to have been killed in action, but their bodies were not recovered. Of those, 436 were Air Force pilots shot down over the sea, whom the Pentagon lists as "non-recoverable." In 647 other cases a presumptive finding of death was made at the time of disappearance. Thus 1,833 of the 2,477 MIAs are known or presumed to be dead. That leaves 644 men who theoretically could still be alive and in Vietnam.

The POW/MIA lobby exploits this uncertainty for all it's worth. In a 1984 *New York Times* Op-Ed piece called "Rotting in Laos," LeBoutillier stated that he has "private sources" who confirm that Americans are still held in Indochina. The organizations of POW/MIA families keep LeBoutillier at arm's length. They make the more modest argument that until there is definitive evidence that the MIAs aren't alive, the U.S. government should act as if they are.

Emotional appeals aside, there is little credible evidence that any of them are still living. Of the 3,508 reports from Indochinese refugees about alleged sightings of missing Americans since 1975, the Defense Intelligence Agency discounts all but five. Only 751 of these alleged sightings were firsthand accounts from Indochinese refugees who claim to have seen—not just heard about—captive Americans. In congressional testimony last August, the director of the DIA, Lieutenant General James Williams, stressed the ambiguity of even these reports. "A lot of these people who talk about live sighting say they have seen an individual who was a Caucasian who they think was an American . . . [and] who looked like he was under guard." According to the DIA, 77 percent of these firsthand reports have been resolved, either by correlating the sighting to men who have since been accounted for, or by determining that the sightings were fabricated.

The DIA has used polygraph exams in investigating the most credible reported sightings. Of approximately 40 witnesses tested since 1979, it says that 24 showed signs of deception, two were inconclusive, and 13 showed no deception. Of those 13, four were of people who have been accounted for, three were sightings of non-prisoners, and one was a fabrication. The remaining five reports represent the best—but by no means conclusive—evidence that Americans are still held in Vietnam.

Other pieces of "evidence" that there are still POWs in Vietnam seem dubious. For example, former U.S. major general John K. Singlaub claims that 13 French POWs captured by the Vietnamese during the siege of Dien Bien Phu in 1954 were not released until 16 years later. A French Embassy spokesman says that all French POWs were released in 1954 and that Singlaub's contention is nonsense.

Some have cited the ramblings of Private Robert Gar-

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NOW, ABOUT RAMBO . . .

"*SYMBOL of the American Spirit.*" That's the headline in the ads for *Rambo*, which is about its hero's foray into Vietnam today to rescue American POWs. The subject has been used before, in *Uncommon Valor* with Gene Hackman, in *Missing in Action* and *Missing in Action II*, with Chuck Norris: but *Rambo* outdistances them. Three facts: *Rambo* is the current box-office champion in the country. ("*Rambo* Ahead by a Mile," *Variety*, June 5.) Like the second Norris film, *Rambo* is a sequel. (In the earlier one, *First Blood*, also starring Sylvester Stallone, Rambo, a returned Vietnam vet, went on a rampage against civilians and National Guardsmen because of mistreatment of Vietnam vets.) *Rambo* is cinematically no piece of schlock; it was made with prime professional skills. (Cinematography by Jack Cardiff, an Oscar winner.) In credibility, the action is as ludicrous as old Saturday-afternoon serials; in execution, the skills help it to skate over the incredibilities.

Rambo's character is constructed with equal care. Stallone wrote the script with James Cameron, using materials devised by David Morrell, and the recipe is right. Rambo is of half-Indian, half-German stock. The Indian blood, I suppose, explains his wilderness skills, his prowess with a knife and with a (modernized) bow. In this simplistic genetic formula, the German half is apparently meant to explain his talents with modern weaponry and with aircraft. From this union, perhaps, Rambo also has enormous biceps and pecs that, day or night, gleam.

The "American Spirit" that Rambo symbolizes is strong, taciturn, self-reliant, and *wronged*. At the start, he is breaking rock in a penitentiary, where he is doing time as a result of his adventures in *First Blood*. His release is negotiated by a colonel who knows him and wants him for a special mission in Vietnam. Rambo asks: "Do we get to win this time?" (Read: "Will we be allowed to win this time?") Rambo has already personified the slighted Vietnam veteran; now he carries forward the stab-in-the-back theory, and it leads to political complications.

The mission, on which he is sent via helicopter and parachute from a U.S. base in Thailand, is to spend 36 hours taking photographs of a Vietnam camp that he knows only too grimly well—to check if there are any American POWs. As soon as Rambo has left, his friend the colonel asks the civilian chief of the base, Murdock, about the existence of such POWs. Murdock doubts it. Evidently he wants his doubt confirmed. But Rambo finds half a dozen, rescues one, and gets him back to the "extraction point," the place where a helicopter is scheduled to lift him out. When the approaching pilot radios the base that Rambo has a POW with him, Murdock orders the pilot to abort the mission—to abandon Rambo and the POW.

At the base the furious colonel storms at Murdock, who explains that the appearance of a POW back home might start agitation for armed invasion: that North Vietnam had wanted $4.5 billion ransom for prisoners back in 1972, that the money was not forthcoming then, and is even less likely to be paid now.

Soon Rambo is captured by a squad of Soviet soldiers, who are not only Vietnamese allies but supply them with arms. The Soviet chief has him tortured to try to make him broadcast a false message to the U.S. base. Despite torture, Rambo refuses; his only broadcast message is to tell Murdock that he is coming back to get *him*. Helped by a Vietnamese girl who had been secretly briefed to guide him, Rambo escapes. (The girl is soon killed, so Rambo is left uncluttered by affection.)

Thus he has three political enemies: the Vietnamese, who want to kill him; the Soviets, who want to kill him; and the American Murdock, whom he wants to kill. Many explosions later, he gets all six of the American POWs out, is himself unhurt, and corners the frightened Murdock, whose life he contemptuously spares.

Rambo tells the friendly colonel that there are more Americans in Nam camps. (How does he know?) When the colonel asks him to join up again and help, he refuses. Apparently he is now a disillusioned loner. The colonel asks him whether he loves his country, and Rambo replies fiercely that he and all other Vietnam vets love their country—what they want is for their country to love *them*. As he walks away, the colonel asks how he will live. Rambo: "Day by day."

Obviously, then, *Rambo* is not just one more guts-and-glory series of impossible exploits. It's a statement of political beliefs, genuinely held or cynically utilized. America lost the Vietnam War but could not have lost it fairly: Americans don't lose fairly fought wars. They must have been betrayed—by elements in the government and the public that are still manipulating and betraying. The Vietnam experience bred a corps of veterans who are stalwart, long-suffering, deeply resentful. (Of course *Rambo* was made before the many recent moves to restore veterans' morale.) If given the chance, they can and will prove that history is not a closed book.

Some other matters loom out of *Rambo*. I can't argue here with the back-stab theory or any other political aspect of the quagmire. Nor do I want to be offhand about a misery that, along with hundreds of thousands of others, took 60,000 American lives. But *Rambo* and its film kin demonstrate that Vietnam today has become a mythological place, somewhat akin to those territories on ancient maps marked "Here there bee tygers." One after another, the heroes set off into that mysterious land to try their courage, to risk their lives in exploits without the complications of war, morally sanctified because the quest is humane and the enemy monstrous. Who needs Westerns now? In fact, quite adroitly, *Rambo* ingests the Western by making its hero half-Indian.

And there's another appeal in *Rambo*. Simplicity. Successful action justifies all. Are you frustrated by the plagues of complex politics? Do you feel cut off from the chance of immediate physical release by the gigantic finality of nuclear war? Take comfort—find promise, even—in those gleaming pecs and the modernized bow.

STANLEY KAUFFMANN

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wood as additional evidence that there are still POWs in Vietnam. Garwood was a Marine captured in the 1960s who won the trust of the North Vietnamese and was allowed a measure of freedom. When he returned to the United States in 1979, he was found not guilty of desertion but was court-martialed for collaboration. He told *The Wall Street Journal* last December that he had seen about 70 American POWs while living in Vietnam. Yet when Garwood first returned he only told the DIA of "rumors" of American POWs. His biography, *Conversations with the Enemy: The Story of PFC Robert Garwood*, published in 1983, never mentions POWs. And his own psychiatrist questions the legitimacy of his disclosures, saying that Garwood suffers from many psychological traumas. Even the POW/MIA organizations doubt Garwood's credibility.

THE POW/MIA issue is unique to the Vietnam War. After World War II, 78,751 American soldiers were missing or unaccounted for. Their number exceeds by 20,000 the total number of American servicemen *killed* in Vietnam. The Korean War resulted in 8,177 MIAs. Yet neither prompted widespread protests and demands for government inquiries. In part, of course, the reaction to the Vietnam MIAs is because we lost the war. The U.S. has no access to places where missing soldiers were last seen alive, and MIA families felt that the country, in its desire to quickly forget the war, was also forgetting their sons, husbands, and brothers. What's more, the MIAs have become a matter of American honor, and their return a symbolic restoration of that honor. The POW movies, especially Sylvester Stallone's current box-office smash, *Rambo: First Blood Part II*, appeal to these sentiments.

But there is another explanation. Far from forgetting these sons and brothers, the government has put them to undisguised political use. Successive administrations have alternated between actively suppressing the families' requests for information and assisting them in publicizing their cause. The results have been disappointing diplomatically, and cruelly misleading for the families.

In 1966 President Johnson was conducting secret negotiations on the POWs with North Vietnamese officials in Paris. The administration believed it would be detrimental to the talks, as well as to the prisoners, to publicize the problem. Administration officials told the families of POWs and MIAs to keep quiet. Valerie Kushner, an MIA wife, told *Life* magazine in 1970, "I wanted to yell from the first day, but I was told by the Army that they would not only not help me, but squelch me."

Three years later President Nixon, aware of the families' growing frustration, decided to champion their cause through a major policy change. Defense Secretary Melvin Laird announced on May 18, 1969, that the administration would "go public" with the POW issue in an effort to use public opinion to pressure the Vietcong into obeying the Geneva principles concerning POW rights. The campaign was waged through press conferences, speaking engagements by former POWs, and demonstrations by POW and MIA families.

In December 1969 Nixon met with 26 POW wives to suggest the formation of a national organization of MIA and POW families. From this core, other MIA families were enlisted to march in Washington on May 1, 1970, in support of the war. On May 28, 1970, hundreds were flown to the capital in military transport aircraft for the first official meeting of the National League of Families of Americans Missing in Southeast Asia. Spiro Agnew presented the League with a check for $10,000 in proceeds from the sale of Agnew watches and T-shirts. A week later a special White House telephone WATS line, linking the League to the White House, was installed in the League's office. Robert P. Odell, the financial director for the Republican National Committee, planned for the League to use the committee's mailing lists to raise money for League travel, advertising, and publicity expenses. Joan M. Vinson, then the national coordinator of the RNC, had written the League's board members that "most importantly, no one will know that we are using the lists owned by the Republican National Committee." But the arrangement began to come undone when Representative Les Aspin had the details printed in *The Congressional Record*. Within the year, the families started questioning the Nixon administration's motives.

BY MID-1971, two years after President Nixon had begun his plan to end U.S. involvement in the war through "Vietnamization," MIA families began to worry. They feared that the reductions of U.S. troops would mean a reduced commitment to the POWs and MIAs. This fear was heightened when the families realized that the Nixon administration's plans did not include any provisions for obtaining the release of POWs or accounting for MIAs. In anger, 400 families split from the League to form the antiwar Families for Immediate Release.

Following the Paris Peace Accords of January 1973, which officially ended U.S. involvement in the war, 591 POWs were released from Vietnam. The Hanoi government said that these were the only prisoners they held. But this only exacerbated the alarm of the families whose boys did not return. The government, abiding by the Missing Persons Act of 1942, would begin conducting automatic status reviews on missing servicemen after a year. If there was no evidence to the contrary, the soldier would be declared KIA (killed in action) and the case closed.

Five people from the National League of Families brought suit in a U.S. District Court to stop the Pentagon from changing their relatives' status from MIA to KIA, demanding that the military prove the subjects dead. In August 1973 the court ruled that reviews could be conducted only on the written request of a dependent next of kin. Ironically, the litigation heightened the anxiety of those families who wanted to end the drawn-out trauma. One MIA wife wrote in a letter to the military Status Review Board: "I wish a status review would be held on my husband, however, I will not request one at this time. . . .

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I would be asking that he be declared dead—something I feel would have psychological implications for my children and my husband's parents. Furthermore, I resent being put in that position by the Military Services—it is their job to determine, on their knowledge, the status of my husband."

For some of the families, no doubt, initially there was a clear financial incentive not to request a review. Benefits to an MIA family at the time were far greater than those awarded to a KIA family. In August 1976 the House Select Committee on MIAs compared the hypothetical case of an Air Force captain, with a wife and three children, declared KIA in 1966, with the same individual listed as MIA until a presumptive finding of death was made in 1975. The total benefits paid over the same period to the MIA wife exceeded those paid to the KIA wife by almost $100,000.

But the financial incentive no longer exists. In 1978 the Pentagon declared all MIAs "presumed dead," except for Air Force Colonel Charles E. Shelton, who remains listed as POW for symbolic purposes. A status reclassification change from MIA to Killed in Action/Body Not Recovered routinely results in a sizable lump-sum payment—in the range of $60,000 to $100,000 in addition to substantial child support payments and educational benefits for dependent children.

THE PLIGHT of the MIA families was complicated by the demands of Hanoi officials. Article 21 of the Paris Peace Accords stipulated that the U.S. "contribute to healing the wounds of war and to post-war construction" in Vietnam. In 1973 President Nixon sent a secret letter to President Pham Van Dong promising Vietnam $3.25 billion in U.S. economic aid over a five-year period "without political conditions." But Congress refused to grant the aid request. Vietnamese negotiators, feeling betrayed, announced that they wouldn't discuss the MIA issue until the aid came through. At the same time they denied that they held any POWs or knew anything about the fate of other MIAs. The United States insisted that the Vietnamese account for the American MIAs as a prerequisite for resuming diplomatic relations. The deadlock continues to this day.

In the mid-1970s, Congress took up the issue. The House Select Committee on Missing Persons in Southeast Asia concluded investigation of the POW/MIA issue for 15 months. It heard testimony from 50 high-ranking officials (including President Ford, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld), held more than 20 executive sessions to discuss classified information, reviewed the files of over 200 soldiers classified as MIA, and petitioned the Pentagon for details on more than 100 of its relevant files. The Select Committee concluded in December 1976 that "no Americans are still being held alive as prisoners in Indochina, or elsewhere, as a result of the war in Indochina."

President Carter, accepting the committee's findings, believed that the next step was to secure the return of any MIA corpses from Vietnamese authorities. He appointed a commission on MIAs headed by the former president of the United Auto Workers union Leonard Woodcock. The Woodcock Commission visited Hanoi in March 1977 under severe handicaps: the group wasn't permitted outside Hanoi, and was forbidden from talking to civilians about the issue. Nevertheless, it agreed with the House Select Committee that there were no American POWs being held in Indochina, and said that the Vietnamese government was doing all it could to account for the MIAs. When in September 1978 Hanoi mysteriously announced its willingness to separate the issues of aid and normalization, it appeared that a substantial accounting of the MIAs was imminent. But President Carter then granted "official" recognition to China—Vietnam's traditional enemy—and Vietnam invaded Cambodia. These developments cooled the slight warming in relations between Washington and Hanoi.

Ironically, Carter's intention to deal directly with Hanoi in an attempt to confront those capable of returning the dead MIAs only managed to alienate those he wished to help most: the families. The National League of Families unanimously rejected the Woodcock Commission's findings and denounced Carter for "disposing of the POWs and MIAs" for the sake of resuming relations with Vietnam.

Then came the placebo politics of President Reagan. Without any new evidence that there might actually be Americans still alive in Vietnam, Reagan revived the POW/MIA issue. In 1982, for the first time in nearly a decade, over 450 MIA family members throughout America were flown to their 1982 annual convention in military transport at public expense. There have since been four other airlifts to Washington, and over 600 MIA family members are expected for this year's convention on July 19. For the last four years on National POW/MIA Recognition Day, the League's black-and-white POW/MIA flag—bearing the words "You Are Not Forgotten"—has flown beneath the American flag at the White House, the Capitol, and the Pentagon. Reagan has brought the families to the White House for well-publicized luncheons and called their cause a "highest national priority." "The way our system works," a White House aide told *The New York Times*, "if the President is personally interested in something, then the Government is interested in it. And Mr. and Mrs. Reagan are personally very interested in MIAs."

THESE GESTURES provide no real hope of ending the families' pain. Reagan has led some of them to believe that they do not have to accept the loss of their loved ones. During Veterans Day ceremonies last November, he stated that "some [American soldiers] may still be saved." If, as the president believes, the Vietnamese have been hiding any POWS all these years, he has hardly given them an incentive to return them. To recant its previous denials now would be extremely embarrassing for Hanoi; it might be far less costly simply to kill the POWs. And for many

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families the calls for greater government action have reawakened horrible images of ongoing torture and abuse in some distant jungle.

Over the past decade intelligence information has shown overwhelmingly that the existence of living American MIAs and POWs in Indochina is highly improbable. Why is the issue kept alive? "This issue has been used many ways throughout its history," says Ann Mills Griffiths, executive director of the National League of Families. "It's been used both to justify foreign policy positions and it's been used as a scapegoat for failed policies as well." These families have had their hopes raised by politicians, publishers, filmmakers, and lawyers in pursuit of self-promotion and profits. Of course, every effort should be made to account for and recover the remains of Americans killed in Vietnam. But that is far different from sustaining the cruel delusion that there may be Americans alive in Vietnam.

We've been living in a dreamworld. What to do when we awake.

THE END OF THE REAGAN BOOM

BY MICHAEL BARKER

WHAT'S GOING ON here? Only a year ago, the economy was racing along at the fastest clip in more than 30 years. Personal income was up, inflation was down, and to many Americans, it seemed positively churlish to deny that President Reagan had succeeded in "laying the foundations for a decade of supply-side growth."

Administration supporters claimed that as long as Federal Reserve chairman Paul Volcker was kept from sabotaging "the Reagan recovery" through an overtight money policy, the future looked bright. Long-term interest rates would gradually settle down to a more reasonable level. Lower interest rates would boost business investment and consumer demand, and also reduce the flood of foreign investment that was keeping the value of the dollar high. As the dollar fell, imports would become more expensive, and exports would become cheaper. This in turn would bring down the trade deficit, and, with luck, take even more pressure off interest rates. With interest rates lower, annual payments on the federal debt would fall, reducing future deficits, and making the Third World's debt more manageable.

That was the plan, anyway. But now, seven months after the election, just when we thought it was going to be "morning in America" for at least another four years, the forecasts are turning remarkably gloomy. First-quarter economic growth figures were virtually flat, raising fears of a "growth recession"—a period in which economic growth is so slow that unemployment increases anyway. In response, the Federal Reserve, which had been refusing to ease credit until Congress took a big bite out of the deficit, abandoned this high-stakes game of chicken and cut the discount rate—the rate at which it lends money to banks—to just 7.5 percent, the lowest rate since 1978. This prompted a drop in the prime lending rate, and cheered skittish Wall Streeters enough to push the Dow Jones average up above the 1,300 mark, a record high.

But it's hard to believe that the Fed's action alone will be enough to prevent another recession either late this year or early in 1986. Business capital spending plans for the rest of 1985 are way, way down, and for 1986 they look even worse. That's alarming, since capital spending on plant and equipment has been a crucial ingredient in the current recovery. The nation's factories are operating at just 80 percent of their theoretical "full capacity." This figure is far below what it ought to be this late in a recovery, partly because of the flood of imports. Business profits are down significantly from the peak of the Reagan boom. Overall industrial growth is nearly stagnant. Only the service and retail sectors keep the economy slogging forward.

Then there's the financial front. There are nearly 1,000 officially anointed "problem banks." All that keeps the battered savings and loan industry from bankruptcy are some questionable accounting practices and a few hasty interstate acquisitions arranged by federal regulators eager to avoid paying off depositors' losses. In Latin America the debt crisis is resuming, and in Western Europe the economic growth hoped for in 1985 has mostly failed to materialize, as short-term interest rates stay stubbornly high.

Is the economy about to fall off a cliff, as it did in 1981? Or is it simply going through a "soft landing," in the jargon of the trade, after which it will right itself and resume a steady upward path? Were the supply-siders

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right in 1984—has Reagan laid the foundations for a decade of supply-side growth? Or is the economy slipping back into stagnation and malaise? Before answering, let's back up a bit.

IN 1981, when Reagan took office, the economy had clear problems: slow growth, flagging productivity, declining capital investment. Supply-side economics held that these problems were largely the result of a tax structure that was: (1) biased against savings and toward excessive consumption (by overtaxing income from capital); (2) biased against work and toward leisure (because of high marginal tax rates in general); and (3) biased against productive investment and toward unproductive paper entrepreneurship (by providing tax depreciation for capital assets that was lower than the actual rate of depreciation). The obvious response? Big tax cuts all around. As the old philosopher says, if all you've got is a hammer, the whole damn world looks like a nail.

The supply-siders made four claims. If taxes on capital income were cut, savings would rise. If taxes on capital investment were cut, capital investment would increase. If the Federal Reserve were supported in steadily reducing money growth, interest rates would fall. And finally, with investment increasing, productivity would rise, leading to a more competitive national economy and a higher standard of living.

On every front, the Reagan economic program has failed to deliver. Despite lower taxes and higher post-inflation returns, personal savings actually have fallen to the lowest share of disposable income in 40 years. At the same time, thanks to the big tax cut (which, remember, was supposed to increase savings), we have a federal deficit bigger than the pool of personal savings, meaning we have to rely on foreign investors to keep the economy afloat. Business investment as a share of GNP is up from the dark days of 1981, but still below Carter-era levels. And the composition of business investment is more distorted than ever by a tax system that leads business planners to pay more attention to the latest permutation of the tax laws than to real economic returns.

Meanwhile, unemployment is at a record high for this stage in a recovery, and promises to start rising again if GNP growth slips below an annual rate of three percent. International competitiveness has declined because of the overvalued dollar, and productivity growth is just limping along at an annual rate of 1.5 percent—less than half the rate of the 1950s and 1960s.

A pretty sorry show. The only real economic accomplishment of the Reagan era is the big drop in the inflation rate—from 13 percent to four percent. But even here, it's hard to give the Reagan economic program much credit, unless the president decides he's willing to take responsibility for the deficit, which is keeping the dollar high, and for unemployment, which is keeping wage gains low. In short, the economy has precisely the same underlying problems it did in 1981: low savings, low investment, high real interest rates (particularly for long-term debt), low productivity, and poor international competitiveness.

All that blustery growth through 1983 and 1984 was nothing more than the pendulum swing of the business cycle, spurred along by record deficits and a Federal Reserve terrified of a long string of bank collapses. The actions of the Fed were particularly important. After driving inflation down to less than five percent in 1982, the Fed was suddenly forced to choose between further progress on inflation and the interests of its principal clients—the big banks. The key event was Mexico's announcement that it wouldn't be making any further payments on its $90 billion in foreign debt. (The Mexican government's economic program had failed to allow for any fall in the world price of oil.) Volcker saw that if this action was formally considered a default, the nine largest U.S. banks would be forced into bankruptcy, precipitating a world financial crisis of the first order. So Volcker masterminded a short-term solution to Mexico's immediate credit problems. But he also cut the discount rate and allowed money growth to accelerate. Market interest rates fell through the floor. Mortgage rates fell too, producing an enormous surge in housing investment, which accounted for more than half the increase in GNP during the first six months of the recovery. From the third quarter of 1982 to the second quarter of 1983, the money supply grew at an annual rate of more than 14 percent—the fastest rate in postwar history. With a boost from growing federal deficits (Reagan's unique brand of "military Keynesianism"), the economy finally came roaring back.

BUT REAGAN has hardly abolished the business cycle. Sooner or later, we'll get another recession. The question is when. Every recession, like every unhappy family, is a bit different, reflecting its origin in odd bits of chance, poor economic policies, and the accumulated debris of previous recoveries. The recessions of the 1970s resulted from clear external events—the OPEC price explosions—combined with fears about future inflation. The recession of the early 1980s was simply the result of the Fed slamming down on money growth in the spring and summer of 1981.

The coming recession almost certainly will be the result of our big trade and fiscal deficits. No country has ever managed to run trade and budget deficits simultaneously and still sustain a recovery. We'll be no exception. Our trade deficit is growing worse, not better, as a result of last year's run-up in the dollar. The fiscal deficit, particularly over the next five years, will remain dangerously, recklessly high, despite a few timid whacks at it up on Capitol Hill.

How bad will the recession be? Just now it appears that it will be relatively mild, compared to the last few. Inflation is low, and fears of future inflation, though real, are less than what they were. So Volcker won't be clamping down on money growth, as he did again last spring and summer—driving Reagan campaign aides near to apoplexy.

On the other hand, the economy probably won't just

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bounce back, as it did in 1983. Why not? Because housing and business investment—the driving forces of the last recovery—won't be exerting nearly the same force. Housing investment won't be responding to such a large drop in mortgage rates, and business already has run through the onetime effects of the 1981 tax cuts. Indeed, in response to the flood of imports, which is idling factories and equipment already in place, capital spending seems sure to fall dramatically over the next year.

The likely result will be sluggish growth through 1986 and 1987, punctuated by at least a few quarters of absolute decline. This alone will cause more bank failures, a greater risk of a major default somewhere in the Third World, and continuing deterioration of the U.S. manufacturing sector. At the same time, the sluggish economy will push up the federal budget deficit, as tax revenues fall and social welfare payments shoot up. Higher deficits, in turn, will increase pressure on the credit markets.

So far in the Reagan era, we've managed to meet our domestic credit demands, including the huge federal deficit, with a fairly steady current of foreign investment (about $85 billion a year), and a precipitous drop in net foreign lending by big American banks (from $75 billion in 1981 to just four billion dollars in 1984). As a result, no interest rate spike has burst the economy's big balloon. But even if foreign investment continues at its current pace (and it will, so long as the dollar stays strong), it's hard to believe that the banks will keep liquidating their foreign loans, and borrowing from their European affiliates, to finance our trade and fiscal deficits. At their current rate of U.S. investment, the banks have just enough money left abroad to keep things going at home for another two years. Something's got to give.

THERE IS STILL a chance that today's "growth recession," if that's what it is, can be transformed into tomorrow's "soft landing." But we need new policies—and soon. Most important, we need easier credit. Given the enormous slack in the economy, interest rates are still too high, and money growth is still too low. With unemployment above seven percent and factory capacity utilization at just 80 percent, there is hardly a risk of reigniting inflation. The recent drop in the discount rate to 7.5 percent ought to be followed up with further reductions.

Where do you stop lowering short-term interest rates? You stop at the point where *long-term* rates start moving back up in anticipation of future inflation. No one can say where this point is, including Paul Volcker. Volcker has quite a bit of latitude here to try out lower rates—seven percent, six percent—since the financial markets trust him to keep inflation in check. If someone like Preston Martin—a Reagan crony out of the thrift industry who is now vice chairman of the Fed and a rumored successor to Volcker—were cutting the discount rate, long-term rates already would be shooting up like mad. The markets would assume that the battle against inflation was taking a backseat to promotion of short-term economic growth. It is a great tribute to Volcker that no such assumption is now being made.

As for fiscal policy, what we need most are long-term spending reductions. Unfortunately Congress still shows little inclination to come to grips with long-term spending pressures, especially in the House, where the Democratic leadership has assembled a budget-reduction package that consists of phony savings, onetime savings, and simple shifts from direct spending through outlays to indirect spending through tax loopholes. Our goal should be to get the deficit down to about two percent of GNP by 1990. Not next year, or even the year after. Right now the economy needs all the stimulus we can give it. Any big reductions in current spending could have just as bad an impact as a big tax increase.

What's nerve-racking is that with each successive recession, the U.S. economy seems to require greater and greater deficits, or bursts of monetary stimulus, to get going again. This ominously suggests that the economy has a bias toward stagnation rather than toward growth, even now, in the Age of the Entrepreneur. Clearly there are limits, even if we haven't reached them yet, to the amount of juice we can apply the next time we need to jump-start a stalled economy. Deficits cannot be expanded infinitely, or money growth either, without the cure proving worse than the disease. This is our central economic problem, and Reaganomics has done nothing to solve it.

WHAT MIGHT all this mean for the politics of the next four years? To begin with, the Democrats should not count on the economy falling off a cliff—at least in the next year or two. Unemployment may drift up slightly, but no more. Volcker doesn't want to replay the 1981-1982 recession any more than Ronald Reagan or the rest of us do, and with inflation low, he doesn't have to. Even if Volcker doesn't take my advice and lower the discount rate even more, it's too late for economic disaster to help the Democrats in 1986.

As for 1988, the sluggish growth we're likely to get for the next two or three years increases the chance that some external event could precipitate a more severe economic downturn. Argentina, for example, could turn into a small lump of bad paper. One or more major financial institutions could collapse.

The other big question mark is who will succeed Volcker at the Fed. It's very likely that, come 1988, there will be someone like Preston Martin sitting atop the sluice gates of the nation's credit markets. If Martin or another appointee showed his gratitude to Ronald Reagan by making easy money the order of the day, this would quite properly reignite all the old fears about future inflation. But not in time to exert much influence on the election. The model here is Arthur Burns. As Fed chairman in 1972, Burns gave an enormous goose to the economy just in time to ensure Richard Nixon's reelection in 1972. The inflation didn't come until later. A similar flood of money in 1988 would produce a great burst of euphoria (just like last year's), and wipe away any lingering memories of the Big Slowdown of 1985-1986. □

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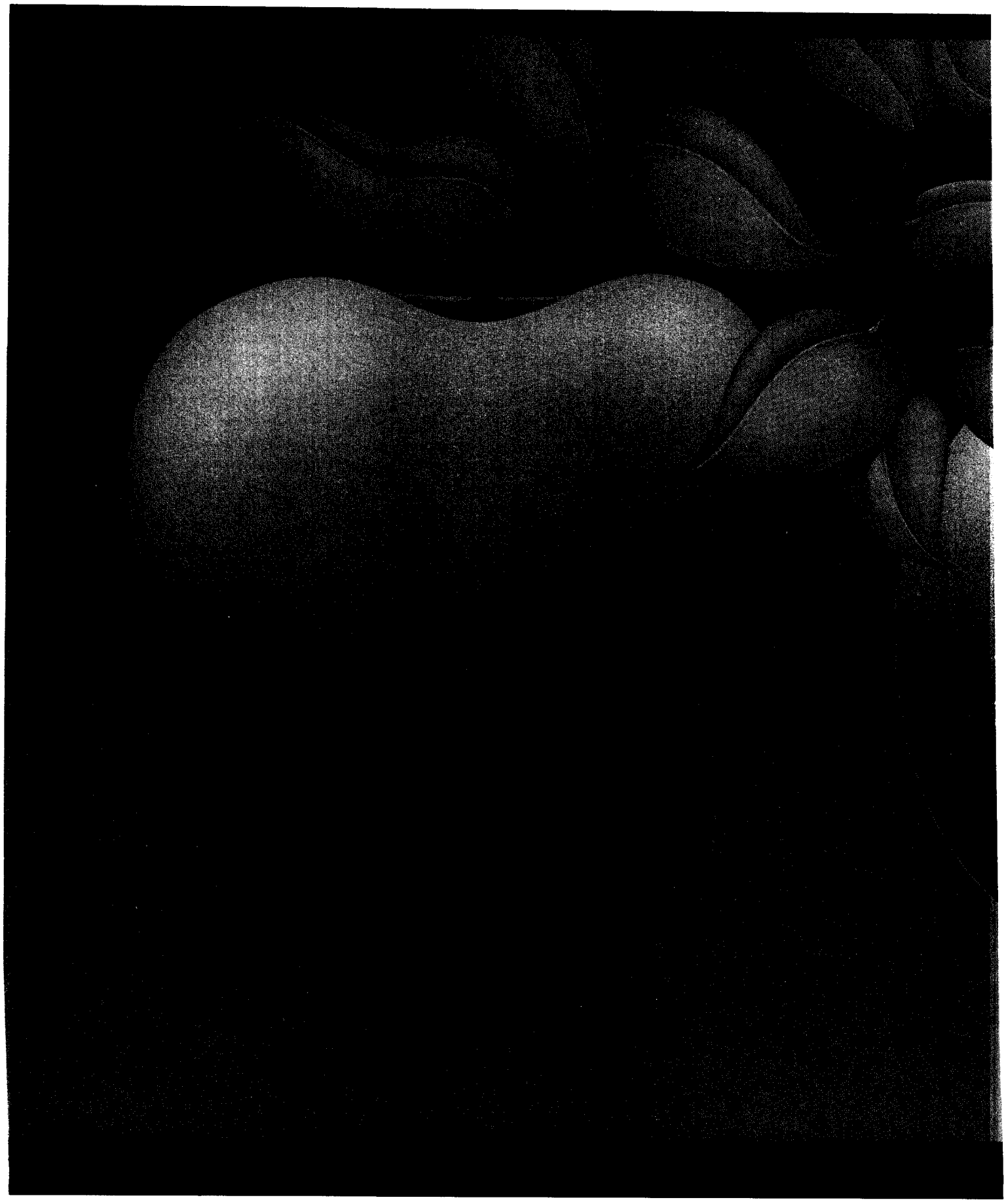

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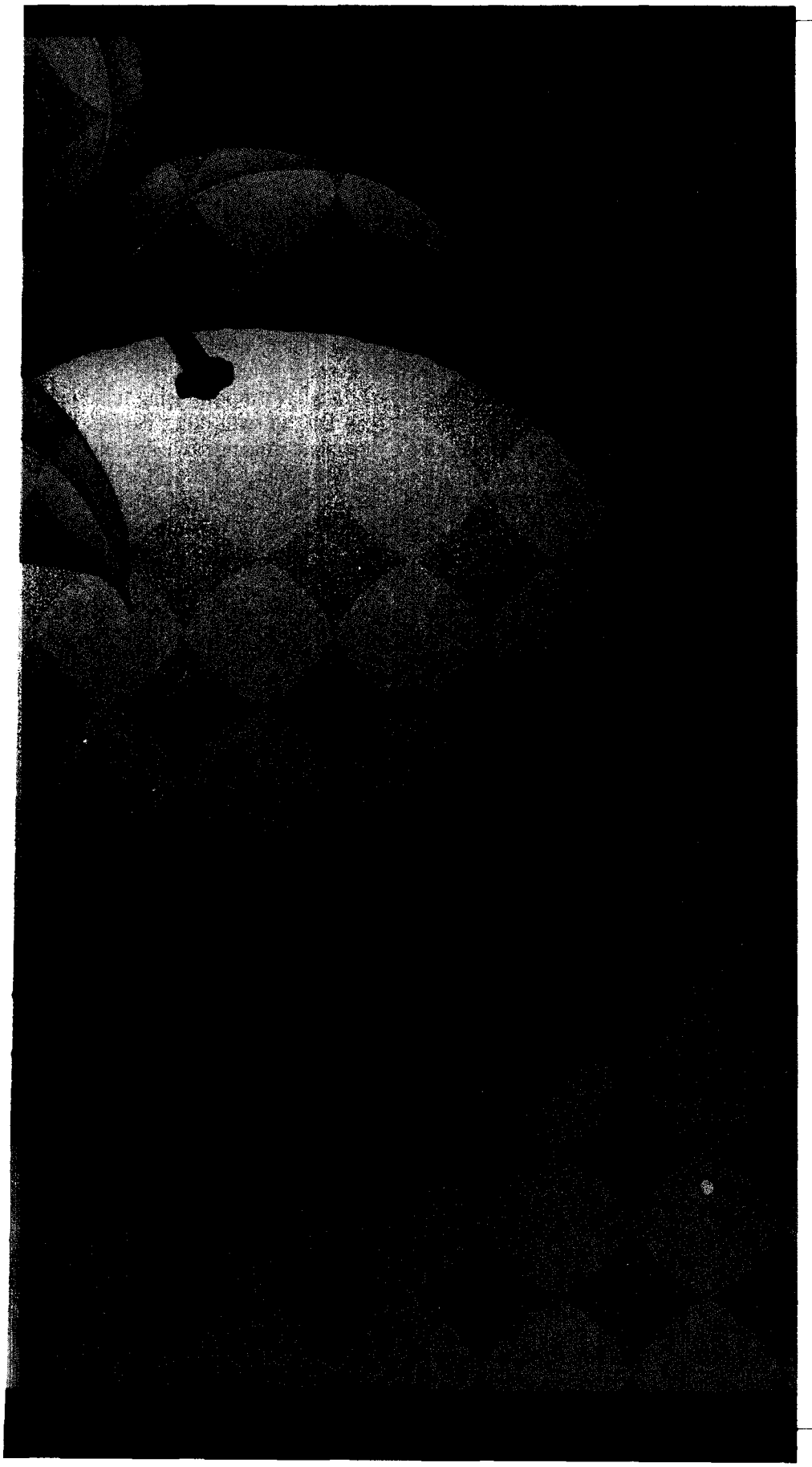

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continued on next page

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continued from preceding page

particular vendor's products. At the core of some proposals is an open-ended commitment to a single supplier.

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Who Was Wagner?

When I took a college course in Wagner, our professor told us on the first day that the final exam would consist of one question: Who was Wagner? On exam day he wrote that question on the blackboard, then left the room.

At the end of the three-hour exam period, some of us were still writing. So when I heard recently of a nine-hour

Wagner
(London Trust Productions)

film that attempted to answer our exam question, it didn't strike me as grotesque. I looked forward to it as eagerly as one can possibly anticipate spending nine hours in one seat from noon to something past 11 p.m. (allowing for a dinner break and a couple of intermissions).

Wagner was made as a TV miniseries and has been sold to 37 countries. In 1983 it was shown theatrically in London and Milan and is now being shown this way in several American cities. A five-hour theater version has been shown in Sydney and Edinburgh and is intended for worldwide distribution. The version shown here is in English, though the producers were British, Austrian, and Hungarian. The director, Tony Palmer, has made numerous documentaries, including one on Sir William Walton (who appears briefly and humorously in this film as the dotard King of Saxony). The writer was the satirist Charles Wood, who did the screenplays of *The Charge of the Light Brigade* and *How I Won the War* but whose natural bent is constrained here. Much of the dialogue is adapted from letters and journals or is upholstered invention, with a great deal of voice-over narration to cover time lapses and explain details.

Richard Burton is Wagner. (Throughout, the composer's name is pronounced bilingually: Ritchard Vogner. This is much like saying Wilhelm Shakespeare.) Burton moves from scene to scene like a man doing one good day's work after another. This tour-guide feeling isn't entirely the script's fault. Burton has no discernible central idea of the character: he merely gives credibility to whatever he has to say at the moment.

Vanessa Redgrave is Cosima, and if one can forget for a while the many photos of Cosima, then Redgrave is perfect as she glides through her devotions to *der Meister*. Gemma Craven works with diligence and truth to give presence to Minna, Wagner's first wife, whose worth is often eclipsed by the glamorous later days. Marthe Keller, always an underrated actress, is dignified as Mathilde Wesendonck, patron and lover. László Gálffi is touchingly credible as Ludwig II, the 18-year-old king whose suddenly empowered passion for Wagner's music revitalizes the depressed 51-year-old composer. And the three great British theater knights, Gielgud, Olivier, and Richardson, have a high old time—amusing themselves and us—as members of Ludwig's government.

Most of the cast are good, but some disappointments are strong. Ekkehard Schall (Bertolt Brecht's son-in-law) is puny as the supposedly mesmeric Liszt. Miguel Herz-Kestranek and Richard Pasco are flavorless as von Bülow and Wesendonck. The most curious casting is Andrew Cruickshank as the narrator, who has a lot to say. Not only do his plummy readings burden the already overripe writing, but he has such a loud whistle on the letter "s" that most of his pronouncements sound like a kettle on the boil.

Palmer's direction is laden with conventional compositions. Double doors keep opening toward us. Long shots of houses and palaces recur and recur to cover time lapses. I lost count of the number of ceiling-high shots looking down on magnificent halls as figures far below advance between pillars. And Palmer uses very many heavy montages, often featuring lakes and swans along with newly encountered elements, often flashing backward and forward and sideways in time. These montages are less structural aids than Palmer's laborious obeisance to the art of film. This art-consciousness is emphasized by Vittorio Storaro's usual assorted-Jell-O cinematography.

The music was conducted by Sir Georg Solti with several orchestras. I assume that Solti recorded a number of Wagnerian excerpts, then left the director and music editor to use them as they liked. This would account for some of the odd juxtapositions. For instance, as Richard and Mathilde consummate their love, we hear the "Good Friday Spell" from *Parsifal*. This and many other combinations, anachronistic as well as peculiar, can, in a certain way, be justified. Many critics have noted that most of Wagner's works were incipient in his mind from the start of his career. In his monumental essay "Sufferings and Greatness of Richard Wagner," Thomas Mann says: "His work, strictly speaking, has no chronology. . . . It is there all at once, and has been there from the beginning." Under that rubric, some of the oddities in usage can be passed.

Biographically the script of course had to select, but in view of the nine-hour range at its command, some of the selections and emphases are questionable. The film begins with a gondola

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Almost You. New York Yuppies nearing the end of youth. A keen, deftly handled comic stiletto. (Reviewed 6/3/85)

Mikey and Nicky. Written and directed by Elaine May, stars John Cassavetes and Peter Falk. Set in crime world. Strong, relentless drama of male bonding, ethics, sexuality. (1/1&8/77)

What Have I Done to Deserve This? Coolly amoral black comedy about Madrid today. Not quite amoral enough, but pretty fierce. (5/20/85)

Where's Picone? Giancarlo Giannini, as the essence of Naples, grifts his way in and out of a string of tight situations. Loose but savory. (5/27/85)

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bearing the coffin through Venice in February 1883 as we are told that a great man has died. The story proper begins in Dresden in 1848 when Wagner was 35. This permits the picture to be launched amid revolution, but this starting point excludes at least two important facts. Wagner, radical revisionist of composition, was virtually self-educated in music. And, besides the composing he did in his early years, he had phenomenal experience as a conductor—was one of the trail-blazers at a time when the profession of conducting was on the rise. We do subsequently see some bits of the early years in flashback. (Including one error: Richard and Minna fled Riga in July, not in winter.) But considering the time at his disposal, why did Palmer begin so late in the life?

ONE REASON may have been to establish Wagner as revolutionary. He was indeed active in the Dresden uprising of 1848, accompanied part of the time by Bakunin, and this activity forced him into exile from Germany for 12 years. In the uprising we see the burning of the Dresden opera house, a shot that is repeated often in many of the montages, presumably as a symbol of Wagner's revolutionary nature. But it's well-known that Wagner's early political activity had some personal motivation, that he gradually dropped all revolutionary concerns, that his political interests changed to Germanic racism. The recurrence of that shot of the burning opera house is thus somewhat misleading.

Considerable time is given to Nietzsche (neatly played by Ronald Pickup) when he comes along in the story, though I'm not sure that we had to follow him into the Franco-Prussian War. We get much of the idolatry and the affection, then the break. Nietzsche's farewell to Richard and Cosima is the longest speech in the film, I think—and it furthers misunderstanding of one of the important aesthetic-intellectual disputes of that century. Thomas Mann says: ". . . Nietzsche's immortal critique [published five years after Wagner's death] . . . has always seemed to me like a panegyric with a wrong label, like another kind of glorification. . . . Wagner's art was the great passion of Nietzsche's life." The film misleads on this matter.

One of the best aspects of the script is its clear presentation of Wagner's fervent anti-Semitism. Obviously any soft-pedaling of this virulence would have been intolerable. But also it connects with one of the two main themes toward which the film stumbles in its second half. The first of these themes is Wagner's productivity as a writer. Perverse as it may sound, the anti-Semitism in the film at least reminds us of his writing, since (as is mentioned) it was an essay of his, "Jewry in Music," that galvanized hate to lasting effect. He wrote copiously on numerous subjects. A 20-page chronological chart at the back of Ernest Newman's *Wagner as Man and Artist* has a column headed "Prose and Poetical Works" next to the column of "Musical Works." There are long blanks in the music list; there are few in the writings.

The second theme is his influence, which is only hinted at in the film. Wagner's being and music gave rise to a force called Wagnerism—no other composer ever occasioned a cognate force—which was hugely influential in music (let's name only Strauss, Mahler, early Schönberg) and was also influential outside music. Mann reminds us that Baudelaire wrote to Wagner that the latter's music "made him want to make music with words alone, to vie with Wagner in language—all of which had far-reaching consequences for French poetry." And the influence of Wagner on the two cosmic novelists of our century, Proust and Joyce—Joyce in his very method of composition—is so apparent that it needs no comment.

Is all this too much for a film? Even in nine hours? Then why was it made? One can conceive of a highly opinionated, fiery film biography of Wagner—although nine hours would be a bit too much of that—or of a broad historical film that treated its subject as the archetypal romantic artist, the summation of the 19th century, the last and the largest self-dramatizing Artist as Hero. All we get here however is nine hours of *Scenes from the Life of. . .*, many of them photographed in the actual places, "cinematized" with laborious montages and dissolves, tied together with fruity narration. Palmer hasn't cheapened his subject: he just isn't big enough for it. The five-hour version may reduce the longueurs and flounderings, but it can't supply wholeness.

Correction: The publisher of Raymond Carney's book on Cassavetes, *American Dreaming*, cited here three weeks ago, is the University of California Press. □

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ROBERT BRUSTEIN ON THEATER

Combating Amnesia

During his brief sojourn in the Sunday pages of *The New York Times*, the English drama critic Benedict Nightingale indicted a central strain of current American drama as "diaper plays," by which he meant works that ignored the urgencies of the political and social world, focusing instead on a surrogate hero's problems with his parents. It was a fundamental criticism of recent American play writing from which only Mamet, Rabe, and Sam Shepard (and not always they) were spared, and it suggested that most of our younger writers were stuck at some premature, essentially narcissistic stage of development.

The Marriage of Bette and Boo
by Christopher Durang

Miss Universal Happiness
by Richard Foreman

At the time, the name of Christopher Durang, whose last childhood trauma play was culpably called *Baby with the Bathwater*, stood high among those accused of an infantile obsession with dirty nappies. But while I agreed with Nightingale's general observations on the regression of much American play writing (even Durang's celebrated *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You* was a fantasy revenge exacted for humiliations experienced during childhood), something troubled me about Nightingale's inclusion of this domestic satirist, and not just because of my personal affection for a former student. After seeing Durang's masterly *The Marriage of Bette and Boo* at the Public Theater, I think I know what it is. *Bette and Boo* is another anguished comedy about growing up in a demented household, but if this is a "diaper play," then so is *A Long Day's Journey into Night*.

It is not entirely frivolous to cite O'Neill when discussing Durang, for both are Catholic writers who know that the past is the present, that until you understand your personal history you will be doomed to repeat the errors of your parents. Nor is this subject without political implications. It suggests how we can elect a Reagan after suffering a Nixon, how we can contemplate intervention in Nicaragua after failure in Vietnam, how we can again neglect our poor, how Bitburg is possible after Buchenwald. The American amnesia regarding the past spreads over every aspect of our lives, our political blunders being bred first not in the political womb of a society that ignores its own history but in the unexamined transactions of parents and children.

Milan Kundera has said that the primary struggle of the artist against tyranny is the struggle of memory against forgetting; he was not just referring to totalitarianism. Durang has learned from bitter experience how closely domestic amnesia and political amnesia are linked. Facing an effort generated by religious groups (including the Anti-Defamation League!) to suppress *Sister Mary*, he has recently become an advocate of another traditional memory in danger of being forgotten, the First Amendment rights. Perhaps this explains why a new poignancy has entered his work in *The Marriage of Bette and Boo*, with no loss of cutting edge. An expanded version of a short play produced when he was a drama student at Yale, *Bette and Boo* is a remorselessly sad, achingly funny assault on the vanities, inanities, and insanities of family life, as seen from the cool, vaguely lobotomized perspective of a college student steeped in Thomas Hardy.

It's safe to say that Durang (who plays the part in this production) bears some resemblance to that student, and that the family depicted in the play shares some qualities with his own. But whereas O'Neill entered his past in order to lay his ghosts to rest, Durang, though engaged in similar acts of absolution, has not yet enacted that rite of exorcism. The play vibrates with absurdist satire, all the more funny for being true, and bitter recriminations, all the more savage for being unresolved. At the center is Bette, the mother, like her own mother passionate for children, and the father, Boo (short for Bore), a drunk like his father before him. At the opening curtain, they are married to the strains of composer Richard Peaslee's stained glass chorale, as Boo's father throws rice in his face. Boo's father is a cheerfully cruel man (his wife, Soot, he calls "the dumbest white woman alive"), while Bette's father is a zombie whose speech defect is an outrage to his family ("I've asked you not to speak—we can't understand you").

Their first child is Matt, the narrator, nicknamed Skippy because Bette loved the movie. When the doctor brings him in, he is dropped on the floor: "It's dead, the baby's dead." Matt survives ("Oh, you're right, it's not dead. You have a son"), but a series of five more infants, born dead, are successively pitched to the floor. Bette is RH negative and Boo is RH positive; the incompatibility of their blood groups effectively symbolizes their relationship. At a disastrous Thanksgiving dinner, Boo drunkenly spills gravy all over the rug and enrages Bette by trying to vacuum it up. Nevertheless, Bette, congenitally *kindernknarr*—she loves babies more than people and names all the dead infants after characters in *Winnie the Pooh*—simply can't repress her desire to increase and multiply, and neither physician nor priest nor psychological counselor can stay these stillborn couriers from their appointed rounds.

IMPASSIVE, detached, Matt manages the chronological narrative, acting as a Brechtian legend board, analyzing Hardy's *The Return of the Native*, listing his favorite nun movies ("The Nun Also Rises," "Nun But the Lonely Heart," "The Nun Who Shot Liberty Valance"), and otherwise trying to keep his distance from the encircling lunacy. His father, Boo, falling on and off the wagon throughout the play, makes desultory efforts to communicate with his son, which inevitably end in failure. Finally, some years after Bette has filed for divorce, she contracts cancer, followed by chemotherapy, prayer, even Christian stoicism, which she rejects ("I don't think God punishes people for specific things; I think he punishes people in general for no reason"). When Boo comes to visit, Bette remembers the past ("All the dead babies," to which Boo responds, "Yes, we had some good times"). Bette endures a spasm of pain, cheerful as ever, then quietly expires, after which Matt's requiem imagines her united with her unborn babies in a place where she waits for Boo, for all the dead Pooh children, "and for me."

It is an oddly touching coda after

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such satiric chaos and anarchic disorder. Durang has earned it by subtly weaving threads of genuine emotion through the pattern of his comic non sequiturs and absurdist turns. All of his characters are quite mad, yet somehow not without appeal. Even Matt's brutal paternal grandfather enjoys his moment of twisted redemption ("Don't try to change anybody—if you don't like them, be mean to them"). *The Marriage of Bette and Boo*, for all its anger and reproaches, is suffused with an aura of understated forgiveness, and it is this element that seems to me new in Durang's work.

THE CAST assembled at the Public Theater and the production are perfect—American theater at its best. Jerry Azks, an ideal Durang interpreter, has directed the play with exactly the right wash of zaniness without neglecting the darker colors of its grim reality, and Loren Sherman's design scheme—a series of rolling panels revealing successive locations—provides the evening with pace and fluidity. As Bette and Boo, Joan Allen and Graham Beckel enact the quintessential union of hysteria and dopiness, their marriage doomed not by any of the usual foibles but by invincible shallowness and armor-plated stupidity. Bill Moor, as Boo's callously indifferent father ("I never wanted much from life. I wanted to get my way in everything, and that's about all"), and the brilliant Olympia Dukakis, her blond hair piled atop her head like a mud pie, playing his bubble-headed mother, Soot ("I think I'm going deaf—God, I hope so"), enact another kind of American marriage, that of brutal master and dumb slave. Patricia Falkenhain plays Bette's mother, looking like Diana Trilling stoned on Methedrine, and Bill McCutcheon, as Bette's father, manages to amuse without pronouncing a single coherent word. (He is equally amusing after he has died from an indigestible slice of birthday pie, and sits on stage with a sheet thrown over his head.) Splendid also are Kathryn Grody and Mercedes Ruehl as Bette's sisters, the one forever on the edge of breakdown, the other always on the verge of parturition. And finally there is Durang as Matt, the cherubic innocent with curare on his fingernails, desperately trying to find some strategy for coping with an incomprehensible world, as he remorselessly proceeds to chronicle its deliriums.

The Marriage of Bette and Boo is a significant advance for its author. All of Durang's works (excepting *Beyond Therapy*, his only screwball comedy) have been satires built on a mound of pain, but *Bette and Boo* represents a greater effort to leaven this pain with understanding. As such, it is just as American as the poisoned apple pie that kills the maternal grandfather of the play and, for all its domestic venom, just as universal in its appeal.

Richard Foreman's new piece for the Wooster Group, *Miss Universal Happiness*, on the other hand, belies its title. Nothing in the work suggests any recognizably shared experience, happy or otherwise. Foreman continues to be maddening in the way he puts the most original theatrical inventions—and there are those who find him unmatched in his control of space and movement—in service to the most arcane theatrical intentions. It's like Mayakovsky gone berserk with a text of undeciphered hieroglyphics. Located in a setting strewn with found objects—hanging clocks, silhouettes, monster drawings, naked light bulbs—the action starts with a scream, followed by a narrator explaining how his lead-lined raincoat protects him from all ambiguities or obscure references. (It doesn't, unfortunately, protect the audience equally well.) Bells ring; lunatics start chewing pillows; strobe lights and deafening rock music reverberate through the room, making us feel imprisoned in a Dada torture chamber with aural drills applied to the eyes, ears, and feet. The Rhoda figure in this noisy madhouse (usually played by Kate Mannheim, here by Kate Valk) appears in the guise of Miss Universal Happiness, besieged by Central American guerrillas: "The outside of my experience," she informs us, "is like a cylinder; the inside is like a cube." Occasionally a more coherent sentence breaks through the murk ("The self for which you search is inside you") but usually we are in the grip of a flippant, manic, calisthenic imagination that seems totally random in its expression, possessed by a profligate whimsicality.

The Central American setting, the terrorist costumes, the repeated references to the word "rebellion," suggest

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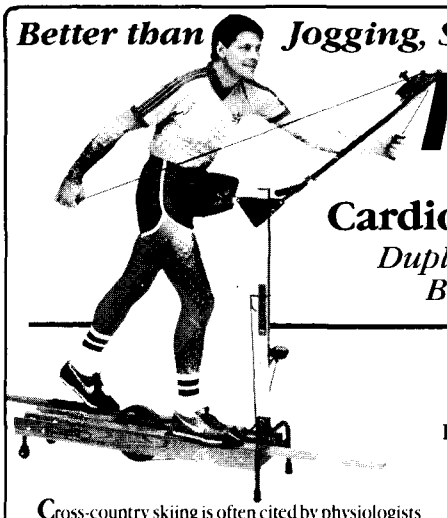

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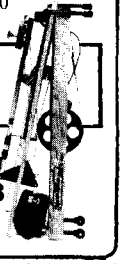

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that Foreman has a political idea up his sleeve, but the piece is so totally lacking in context, so private in its imagery and symbolism, that it ends up as a solipsism. I have always assumed that it was domestic drama that cast the audience as Peeping Toms, and experimental theater that tried to engage it. But if I left Durang's play at the Public feeling part of a community, I fled the Foreman piece at the Performing Garage feeling like a voyeur.

Women's colleges and their consequences.

SEPARATE BUT EQUAL

BY PATRICIA MEYER SPACKS

"THE ABSURDITY of sending ladies to college, may, at first thought, strike every one, to whom this subject shall be proposed. I therefor hasten to observe, that the seminary here recommended, will be as different from those appropriated to the other sex, as the female character and duties are from the male." So wrote Emma Willard in 1819. More than a century and a half later, no longer certain about the nature or even the reality of differentiated "female character and duties," we send over five and a half million women to colleges and universities, a group that accounts for more than half the total population of such institutions. But the fundamental questions about higher education for women—to what social ends should women be educated, and how?—remain problematic, though they have largely receded from public consciousness.

In the Company of Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America by Barbara Miller Solomon (Yale University Press, 298 pp., $25)

Women in College: Shaping New Feminine Identities by Mirra Komarovsky (Basic Books, 355 pp., $19.95)

Alma Mater: Design and Experience in Women's Colleges from Their Nineteenth-Century Beginnings to the 1930s by Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz (Knopf, 420 pp., $25)

The quotation and the statistics in the preceding paragraph come from Barbara Miller Solomon's absorbing history of women's higher education in the United States, a record of shifting intentions and expectations but also of steadily enlarging female opportunity. First of all, visionary women and men had to reconcile the idea of advanced female education with the prevailing social assumption that women belong in the home. But their success did not solve the underlying problem: Solomon's continuing narrative of intertwining social and educational expectation reveals the sustained ambiguity of women's claims to autonomy even as females came to constitute an educational majority.

In the beginning—the 18th-century beginning—a few articulate spokeswomen supported female education. Abigail Adams argued in a letter to her husband, John, that only accomplished women could ensure the American republic a continuing supply of accomplished men, since mothers must train their male children. More startling, Judith Murray, in a series of late-century essays, claimed the connection between education and self-respect, insisted on the "Utility of Encouraging a Degree of Self-Complacency, Especially in Female Bosoms," and pointed out the importance of providing women with ways of earning a living. It remained, however, for such early 19th-century innovators as Mary Lyon and Emma Willard to develop practical expedients for making female education sufficiently unthreatening to the male establishment. The institutions these women founded offered what we call secondary education (although Lyon's Mount Holyoke Seminary ultimately became a college), but confronted precisely the problems soon to face those who essayed higher levels of female instruction.

Oberlin College opened in 1833, announcing its Christian purpose of educating men and women, white and black, together. It offered a coeducational rhetoric course, but women students requested separate classes, understanding rhetoric as a male province. Women privileged to write speeches for graduate exercises, in the early 19th century, assumed that male classmates would declaim those speeches. Such facts exemplify the problem of education's function for women. Education implied for the female only limited entrance into the public sphere. A woman might teach in female academies and seminaries, or, under male guidance, become a missionary. But educators generally endorsed "the accepted Christian ideal of True Womanhood, summed up in the precepts of piety, purity, obedience, and domesticity. . . . They promised that women would not be spoiled for family duties."

IN INCREASING numbers, however, educated women chose not to marry, or to marry late, preferring close relationships with other women to heterosexual ties or preferring to devote themselves to careers, most often in teaching. Although the themes and problems of female education, according to Solomon's narrative, have remained in some respects constant from the 18th century to the present, they have also changed. Solomon identifies three generations of college women from the Civil War to World War I, each group more vigorously concerned than its predecessor with public issues. After World War I, more blacks, Catholics, and Jews joined white Protestant women in colleges and universities. The shift to coeducation intensified: by 1981, 92 percent of all institutions of higher learning were coeducational (compared to 29 percent in 1870, 69 percent in 1930), with but five percent reserved for women only.

Different periods have generated various degrees of female political involvement among college populations, various curricular emphases. The women's liberation movement aroused new awareness, with curricular and extra-

Patricia Meyer Spacks, professor of English at Yale, is also a trustee of Wellesley College. Her most recent book, *Gossip*, has just been published by Knopf.

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curricular consequences. In the late 20th century women face an enormous range of choices, Solomon concludes.

> Many recognize that they must respect and retain the sense of woman's consciousness and at the same time must not permit society to limit their aspirations as individuals and as womankind. Ultimately the well-being of American women will mean the well-being of the whole society. The means to this end then is the challenge of the next generations of educated women.

But the text preceding this hopeful peroration provides grounds to question its cogency. How, exactly, do we keep society from limiting our aspirations? The issues of female education that persist, in Solomon's telling, from the beginning to the present remind us how insistently society helps determine individual imaginings; Komarovsky and Horowitz demonstrate the point.

CONSIDER, for instance, the Barnard class of 1983. Barnard, a women's college—one of the "Seven Sisters"—affiliated with Columbia University, attracts a group of students "slightly younger, more liberal, wealthier, and more academically oriented" than the national norm. Mirra Komarovsky investigates the 1983 class in order to examine the effect of female education on a specific group of young women. She concentrates on the students' hopes and intentions about their post-college careers, using a carefully designed study including questionnaires administered to a large proportion of the class in its freshman, sophomore, and senior years, with follow-up "in-depth interviews" for many respondents. (A much smaller group—nine freshmen—supplemented the questionnaire by keeping journals for one semester, following an outline prepared by the author.) The study focuses, Komarovsky explains, "on what might be termed the gender perspective of female undergraduates: their lifestyle aspirations . . . and attitudes, beliefs, and values related to their feminine identities."

Like other sociological studies, this reveals pretty much what one would predict. Some women come to college expecting full-time careers and graduate with the same expectations, some change their minds, some wish to combine marriage and career, some want full-time domesticity, and so on. Almost equally predictable, though more interesting, are the factors that seem to

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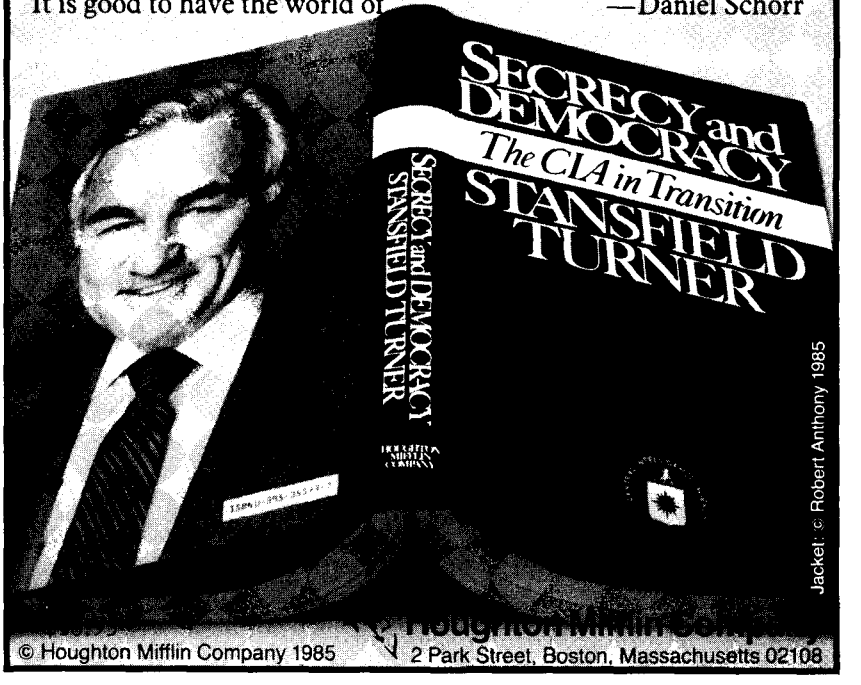

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influence women's various aims. *Women in College* examines students' family relationships, their social experience with other women, their contacts with professors, their sexual lives, their attitudes toward men. Women whose college experience "converts" them to career commitments profit from the influence of their peers.

> Other influences of the college experience include positive relationships with faculty in out-of-class interaction, female role models among teachers, successful work and internship experiences while at college, and the college ethos supportive of occupational achievement for women. The new values acquired due to these experiences led some converts to reassess and reject previously taken-for-granted traditional parental marriages.

Such students, in comparison to their more traditional counterparts, display more resilience in the face of disappointment, more initiative in relation to their professors, more purpose in seeking vocational opportunity: in short, one might conclude, more aptitude for the competitive realm of public accomplishment.

KOMAROVSKY, however, does not directly consider the question of aptitude. As clearly as Emma Willard's, her language reveals her biases. Not only does she characterize those who make relatively late career commitments as "converts"—presumably to the true faith—she labels as "defectors" and "waverers" those who doubt or relinquish comparable early commitments. For her, female dedication to work outside the home comprises a moral ideal, the best way to realize students' "potential." Her study discovers in its sample a "general trend toward increased career salience [i.e., focus on career as central concern] combined with family life and toward greater certainty of occupational choice." It seeks ways that Barnard and society at large can further such results even more often.

For Komarovsky sees female student dilemmas as more social than personal: "The problems depicted in this study are, in the author's view, amenable to social control." "Social control" would involve altering "the traditional ideology concerning the segregation of the sexes within the family" and overhauling "several institutions in a profound way" (which she never specifies). The optimistic vagueness of such recommendations and the failure of Komarovsky's concluding exhortations to acknowledge possible economic or political obstacles to public female achievement create a faint pathos precisely echoing that of the Barnard women's visions. Students and sociologists alike can imagine versions of reality more comfortable than any they are likely to encounter.

THE imaginings, of course, have their own importance: among other things, they may generate change. If, for example, Barnard students typically describe a "feminized" male as their ideal man, do today's young women constitute a force for modifying actual male behavior? Possibly so. Eighty-nine percent of freshmen respondents checked "warm" as an adjective describing the ideal man, 90 percent checked "affectionate," 85 percent checked "sensitive." Only 25 percent checked "forceful." On the other hand, 61 percent checked "forceful" as an adjective characterizing the ideal *woman*. Komarovsky emphasizes the possibility that students stressed traits they found problematic in themselves or in men; still, the responses remain striking in their divergence from hallowed stereotypes.

They become yet more striking as one reads the account of these young women's college relations with actual men, who frequently display masculine characteristics utterly opposed to those the freshman idealized. A young woman who asks a man to have a cup of coffee discovers, as she tries "to be honest and straightforward with him," that her companion assumes "the reason I asked him out for a cup of coffee was a sexual come-on." Another, attempting to claim intellectual equality with her boyfriend, discovers that "when people were asking me questions, he'd cut me off or finish the sentence for me." "Why don't you just talk like a normal human being?" a young man inquires of a woman eager for conversation.

Although the individuals studied here emerge sharply only in occasional fragments from interviews or journals, the book leaves the impression that their progress through college often involves either radical compromise of expectations or determined denial of obstacles in their paths. One student explains her turn toward feminism as a product of anger at her college experience. "When I came, I felt I had a healthier attitude. I tried to give men the benefit of the doubt and I would judge people according to their personality, rather than sex, but men treat women here abominably." If these women retain high expectations for fulfilled lives of work and love, they do so by clinging to isolated models ("I'm encouraged by one of my professors who has a fourteen-month-old baby. She hires someone to care for her baby"), by rather desperate insistence on their rights ("I've learned that if I want something, it doesn't mean that I'm a bad wife or a bad mother. If I want something, I need it, and it's good for me"), or by an equally desperate myopia ("Kids are capable of taking care of themselves for the most part, like I did").

PERHAPS progress through college, as through life, has always implied declining expectations, especially for women. A women's college in particular, with its encouragements to take the female self seriously, may stimulate awareness of possibilities not readily realized in the heterosexual world of business or of most professions. Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz takes a close look at a group of such colleges, from their beginnings to their late 20th-century development. She examines the self-descriptive rhetoric of women's educational institutions, their actual pedagogical and social environments, the careers and personalities of their administrators, the architecture of their campuses. The specificity and detail of her data, the thoughtfulness and depth of her analysis, her willingness to rest in the tentative when certainties seem unavailable—this striking combination of qualities makes *Alma Mater* compelling (if sometimes disturbing) reading.

Particularly provocative is the book's examination of college architecture, which Horowitz understands as richly expressive of cultural assumption. The original founders of American educational communities of women emphasized protection from the outside world as a desideratum of female education. Early architects modeled women's colleges not on male educational institutions but on the insane asylum, an enterprise notably successful at keeping its inmates securely "inside." Unlike the mentally ill, however, women students proved impossible to control in such simple fashion—not because of their own unruliness but because of the many forces working against the cloister or the asylum as models for the college. Women isolated together de-

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veloped close attachments to one another—potential threats, certain commentators thought, to the perpetuation of the race, not simply because of the danger of homosexuality but because if women decided they could get along in the world without men, could learn and grow and enjoy themselves with no male intervention, could live essentially autonomous lives, incalculable social consequences might ensue.

WHEN Smith College opened in 1875, Clark Seelye, its first president, announced in his inaugural address, "It is to preserve . . . womanliness that this College has been founded." As Horowitz points out, he had evolved

> a solution quite wonderful in its simplicity. Educate women in college but keep them symbolically at home. Erect a central college building for instruction and surround it with cottages where the students live in familial settings. . . . Prevent . . . the creation of a separate women's culture with its dangerous emotional attachments, its visionary schemes, and its strong-minded stance to the world.

As part of his effort toward heterosexual normality, Seelye hired a largely male faculty. Other women's colleges followed the opposite course, choosing women to protect women. Neither tactic long succeeded in preventing the development of student social patterns responsive to young women's needs rather than to their mentors' convictions.

The complicated story Horowitz tells defies summary. It records shifting beliefs and feelings about female education; it depicts a remarkably various cast of characters, in which M. Carey Thomas, a woman of strong convictions and unyielding purpose who long presided over Bryn Mawr, plays a particularly vivid role. Believing that the "life of the mind was neuter," Thomas helped to create a campus that "gave no clue as to the gender of its student body." Governed by powerful aesthetic and intellectual principles (but only nominally committed to the Quaker faith she professed during her presidency), Thomas encouraged Bryn Mawr students toward passionate devotion to intellectual endeavor. Her own passion focused not only on the life of the mind but on a close female companion; Horowitz treats their attachment with tactful detail. Such liaisons on the part of administrators and faculty apparently troubled no one, but architectural changes in early 20th-century women's colleges suggest persistent anxiety about comparable attachments among students. Increasingly elaborated "public space," for instance—parlors and sitting rooms designed to allow entertainment of male visitors—implied corollary limitations on student rooms, made ever smaller to discourage single-sex intimacy.

John Raymond, the first president of Vassar, reported to the trustees in 1869, after his fourth year, his worry that too much "spirit, of ordinary colleges," might creep in to "impair womanliness of character in our students, & encourage the formation of those mannish tastes & manners which are so disgusting to every right mind & feeling." Five years later Clark Seelye in a public lecture emphasized his distaste for the professional woman, in whom "the gentle-woman is lost in the strong-minded." "Has not their training," he inquired rhetorically, "repressed their amiable qualities, made them bigoted, what the English would call bumptious, and very frequently excessively conceited?"

DESPITE such male anxieties, the progress of female education inexorably continued. Horowitz ends her story in the 1930s, with the founding of Scripps, Sarah Lawrence, and Bennington. She forbids herself the ringing optimism of Solomon's and Komarovsky's conclusions. "Throughout their complicated histories," Horowitz writes finally, "the women's colleges have accepted the challenge . . . posed [by offering the liberal arts to women] with a mixture of fear and hope." Singularly appropriate emotions, which any reader may share; for the conceptual perplexities of higher education for women, these studies suggest, have not yet been resolved. On the one hand, the worry about "uppity women" suggested in Raymond's and Seelye's comments still continues in some circles. On the other side—well, a teacher at a distinguished women's college told me a few years ago that every single freshman in the current class had expressed her intention of majoring in pre-med. Many, of course, perhaps most, would change their minds. But the fantasies implicit in such universal choice suggest the pressure young women feel (a pressure partly generated, I would argue, by their educations) to define

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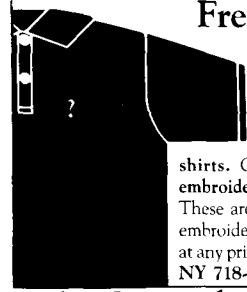

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themselves by participation in traditionally male professions, in the public rather than the private sphere.

So the original situation has reversed itself. Initially, educators promised that women would not because of learning abandon their traditional lives of service. Now, education holds forth the hope that women too can perform on the stage of public life. If this change constitutes an enlargement of female choice, splendid! But what if it amounts only to a new restriction, the kind of restriction men have traditionally assumed for themselves? As Komarovsky's book most vividly suggests, some assess the success of female education by what its recipients do in the world. The most popular major at Wellesley these days is economics. Women flock to business school; they do not openly worry about "womanliness." Yet the Barnard students' desire for traditionally "feminine" qualities in their men hints at anxiety lest "feminine" values, no longer overtly supported by educational institutions, disappear altogether.

Behind the confusion about the purposes of educating women lies the deeper problem of what salient differences divide the sexes. All three of these studies about female education reveal that problem's intractability. Current theory, in coeducational and single-sex institutions alike, assumes the truth of M. Carey Thomas's dictum about the mind's sexlessness: the same education serves both genders. The implicit corollary, given the maleness of our educational tradition, is that women should be more like men. Will the 21st century produce the institutions that encourage men to be more like women?

IN PRAISE OF SPYING

Secrecy and Democracy: The CIA in Transition by Stansfield Turner

(Houghton Mifflin, 304 pp., $16.95)

"Arrogant, insensitive, absurd ideas . . . [he] has ruined the place. . . ." That was the common run of rightward Washington comment on Stansfield Turner as director of Central Intelligence by the end of 1977, his first year in office. By then Jimmy Carter no longer maintained his deceptive pretension to bi-Pauline balance. Of his two supposedly coequal chief advisers, Paul Nitze was moving toward conspicuous opposition, while Paul Warnke was running arms control policy, the only strategy that aroused the president's enthusiasm. For the rightward thinking, the stories coming out of the CIA—about the 2,000 covert-branch officers abruptly fired on Halloween day to "emasculate" the country's espionage abilities, about the placement of narrow-minded Navy officers in key positions, about the new director's disruptive managerial changes—seemed quite consistent with the revealed character of the Carter administration. The Annapolis graduate who seemed set on ruining the nation's defenses had found a classmate to ruin the CIA for him.

But this reviewer, as rightward-thinking as any, was nevertheless denied the clarity of that analysis, for he had heard it all several years before. At that time it came in regard to Stansfield Turner's term as president of the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, the place where the Navy's future admirals are supposed to be educated. It was on a working visit, some months after Turner's appointment in 1972, that I heard the complaints from officer-students, and from some of the faculty too. In fact, the place was then being greatly transformed by Turner, in ways most uncomfortable.

With its Mahanian vitality long since spent, the college had been in the business of offering an extended vacation in Newport's pleasant surroundings to Navy mid-level officers between command tours and career-enhancing headquarters assignments. Its staff was just as comfortable, teaching an antiquated curriculum replete with self-congratulatory Navy banalities, punctuated by more of the same from visiting lecturers, who were often retired admirals. By tacit arrangement, Turner's predecessors had indulgently overlooked the somnolence of the teaching staff, while the staff in turn was just as indulgent with the officer-students.

To break this pattern, Turner brought in a cadre of civilians and selected Navy officers of unusual intellectual quality to formulate a drastically revised curriculum; the new studies were to be strong on both the truly modern and the ancient classics, in lieu of the merely outdated. He created a center for advanced studies under James E. King to set scholarly standards for the entire college, showed a remarkable instinct for picking out the talented in his inherited teaching staff while he forced out the rest, and made it clear to the students that they were in Newport to read broadly, think freely, and study hard—and not to indulge in suburban repose with some fishing thrown in.

The "arrogance" that his critics complained of referred to Turner's dismal opinion of the college as it had been. He was "insensitive" because he refused to tolerate private indulgence at public expense. His "absurd ideas" were such things as the compulsory reading of Thucydides, instead of the memoirs of retired admirals or of nothing at all. The ruination Turner was inflicting was the hard work imposed on both officer-students and the staff, as well as his insistence that bright academics and serious men of affairs be invited to give the frequent outside lectures. Thus he displaced the previous cycle of visitors, the retired admirals who so greatly relished the Navy's VIP privileges in the luxurious college "cabin" before and after their "When I was in command of. . ." lectures of complacency. Trivial in itself, this last outrage was important in its consequences: the retired cohorts spread the word that Turner was trying to educate a new kind of naval officer, who might question the sacred pieties—including the sanctum sanctorum of the aircraft carrier, and the huger-is-better school of thought in ship design in general.

IN THE Central Intelligence Agency, too, Turner imposed, or tried to impose, painful transformations, and to eliminate staff. In that case, again, it was the retired cohorts above all—surprisingly well-connected in the media—who blackened his reputation outside the institution's walls. Among the other managerial efforts recorded in his

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book, Turner wanted to place the CIA's traditionally independent three major branches under a joint administration. At the same time, he sought to elevate two of them, the analytic and technical, toward equality with the traditionally dominant "operations" branch, which gathers information by espionage and carries out covert action. Moreover, Turner reduced that latter branch by 820 posts. Most of those operations officers were eliminated by transfers and scheduled retirement. (According to Turner, only 17 people were dismissed and 147 others forced into early retirement—far from the 820, let alone the 2,000, of media gossip.) It seems, in fact, that a 1,350-post reduction had been called for by the branch itself during the previous administration, although over a five-year period instead of Turner's two.

In his other role—as director of Central Intelligence, as opposed to head of the CIA as such—Turner had less success in coordinating the Pentagon's Defense Intelligence Agency (the military's own analysis shop), the amply funded National Security Agency (which gathers electronic intelligence in order to do its own analysis), and the State Department's intelligence and research bureau. He was even less successful in obtaining cooperation from the intelligence organizations of each military service; his own Navy's organization was the most defiant of all. The president, it turns out, wanted his own "raw data" to play with, and without his backing Turner's attempts could only fail. By sheer obstructionism, the NSA and the rest even defeated Turner's utterly modest ambition of imposing a unified system on the chaos of 50-odd overlapping and obscure "code-word" classifications, which are supposed to regulate secrecy above the common run of "top secret."

I have no notion of the wisdom or weaknesses of Turner's managerial changes, nor can I judge whether reforms, however wise in theory, were healthy for the much-battered CIA just then. Those who know more about the inner truths of the place and the time will have to judge for themselves. Still, about the men Turner recruited no doubt is warranted. His chosen deputy, Frank Carlucci, holds qualities so large in a small frame that his midterm resignation from his next job, as deputy secretary of defense, left a huge void that remains quite unfilled. Not one of the Navy officers whom Turner brought in, and whose presence at the Agency's headquarters in Langley was so greatly resented, fit the stereotype of narrow-minded martinet imposed upon them all. (His front-office aide, George Thibault, is a quintessential man of culture hugely miscast in that role.) The talent shown by Turner in choosing men in the remaking of the Naval War College obviously did not fail him in his new job. Even in selecting a retired four-star general to chair the abortive "code-word" committee, he chose John Vogt—a notoriously bright light in the dim crowd of Washington's ex-military figures.

UNFORTUNATELY, Turner's book also provides much evidence of dubious judgment in highly important matters, and none more important than the matter of espionage. Although he criticizes Congress for refusing to fund replacement observation satellites to keep in reserve, Turner shows scant awareness of the very great danger of relying so heavily on a small number of essentially fragile machines. The purpose of our entire military establishment is to avoid a nuclear war, both by deterring nuclear attacks and by being ready to fight a protracted non-nuclear war. The purpose of the great Soviet military growth of the last two decades is precisely to acquire war-winning strength, without nuclear use. Prosaic military intelligence—on the dispositions and movements of enemy forces, on the concentrations of strength that must precede any large offensive, and on its directions—would be crucial to holding the line of defense without having to resort to nuclear weapons; and such things can all be observed visually, either by machines or by eyeball Mark One.

With their fully sufficient precision and freedom from earthly boundaries, photographic and "real-time" TV satellites in space seem greatly superior to long-range manned aircraft. They are altogether more reliable and comprehensive, of course, than any ordinary spy network could possibly be. But all that is true only in peacetime. As soon as combat begins, the satellites are likely to be the first to go. The Soviet Union tested antisatellite weapons long ago, and no treaty can protect them because any long-range ballistic missile, invisibly modified, can do the job. Nor can deterrence shield them; if the Soviet Union chooses to unleash a destructive,

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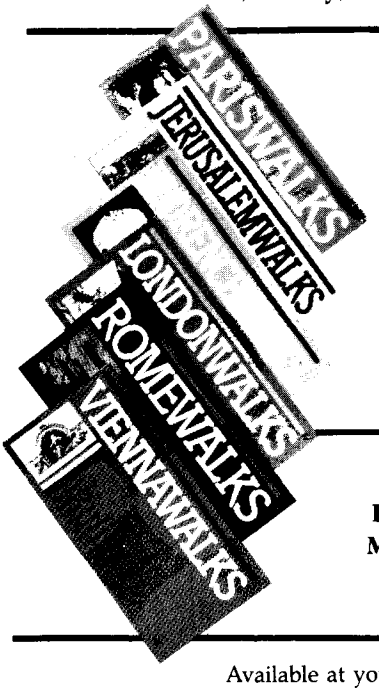

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albeit non-nuclear, offensive in Europe, it will certainly not hesitate to destroy some inert machinery in space; and it would have little to fear from our retaliation.

BECAUSE WE have enjoyed our satellites in peacetime, however, no effort has been made to ensure the upkeep of long-range manned reconnaissance aircraft: the still ultra-modern looking SR-71s are well into their second decade, and no timely replacements are in sight. Manned aircraft are less vulnerable than satellites, but they, too, are vulnerable—dangerously so when their total number is under 24. That is where good old espionage nets have the true advantage. There is no need for a Mata Hari's broadcasting war plans from the Warsaw Pact commander's bedroom to do the job: the classic trio of train-spotters, roadside vehicle counters, and barracks-watchers with radios will do very nicely. Of course, as with any serious enterprise except commodity trading, the eventual payoff will come only by dribs and drabs, from years of hard and patient work. Still, if low-level espionage by willing helpers in the paths of the Soviet army across Poland and East Germany and elsewhere helps us to hold the front of an eventual war by non-nuclear defense, that result alone will have justified all possible effort.

But of course there is much more to espionage. There must be peacetime political reporting from countries about obscure and secretive politics; or from inside specific parties that may have such a style of politics even in open societies (as in the case of the European Communist parties); or even economic espionage from the countries wise enough to make that their chief strategy. And then, too, there is always the chance of enlisting a Mata Hari—the master-spy of legend, not the hapless *entraineuse* who excited Frenchmen far more than she ever helped the Germans.

Turner exculpates himself from the charge of ignoring the virtues of espionage, but his entire approach nevertheless slights its importance. Still less does he accord a proper place to covert action, the full range of unacknowledged political and quasi-military activities that remain important in a world in which the chief antagonists cannot and must not engage in direct and overt conflict for fear of nuclear escalation. In a world such as ours, the capacity for covert operations provides an essential substitute for overt military means that are simply too dangerous to employ.

As the decline of Leninism as an ideology that inspires loyalty relentlessly continues, the Soviet reliance on covert action increases. In place of the self-persuaded intelligentsia of yesterday, Moscow must increasingly rely on terrorists of all persuasions and of none, out to destroy what they can of all powers of this world but one. And as its claims of social and economic success grow increasingly hollow, Moscow relies more and more on forgeries and manipulated agents of influence, with surprising effect in a good many countries around the world. (Greece is but one case among many.) Purely defensive covert action is already of great importance in itself, therefore, if only to give a fair chance to democratic forces—otherwise disarmed against subversion—to combat terrorism and expose anti-American propaganda.

Turner is lukewarm on covert action of the political kind, and he is frankly hostile to quasi-military covert ventures. While he rules out neither absolutely, and indeed records his own efforts to resume both after the Agency's previous period of shell-shocked inactivity, Turner has a minimalist view of how much should be done. He approvingly quotes Representative Norman

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Mineta's feckless complaint that "the CIA was rebuilding itself as a credible intelligence-gathering group. But what I see Casey doing is turning it into a paramilitary agency to implement policies." Thus Casey and his CIA stand accused by Turner, too, of conducting the business of the American government. Or is the CIA merely to study the world with philosophical detachment? Surely there are certain policies that only the CIA can implement, unless we create yet one more agency for the same purpose. With a long list of countries now under communist forms of colonial rule, today's anticolonial insurgents are increasingly fighting Soviet soldiers or their proxies, directly or indirectly.

MOREOVER, if we do not help those who are fighting and bleeding for freedom as they see it, who will? And if we deny aid to leave room for a "political settlement" between those who have the guns (and tanks, too) and those who are quite powerless, what sort of peace can we expect but the sinister tranquillity of totalitarian suppression? And if we deny aid in order to conserve the wealth of the richest country of the world for cosmetics, pet food, spectator sports, $400 pliers, and other such essentials, what kind of country are we? It is all very well for the Swedes and others to practice the morality that refuses arms to anticommunist insurgents and the Soviet army alike, just as they once maintained their neutrality between the Nazis and those who fought them. The United States can certainly not emulate them.

Thus nothing is more proper and fitting than the effort that William Casey's CIA has been making to intervene in such unequal struggles, by providing modest amounts of aid in the form of equipment, specialized forms of training, and operational advice. To be sure, as soon as the perfect safety of total inaction is abandoned, mistakes will be made. Still, such mistakes should be recognized for what they are—signs that fallible humans are at work, where before nothing was being done at all. With congressional oversight as the law provides, and with less disingenuous partisanship than we have had of late, it is more quasi-military action that we need, and not less.

The reader will encounter a sufficiency of interesting tales in Turner's book before he reaches the last part, where cool analysis and honest recitation give way to polemic against today's CIA and its leadership. Turner authoritatively reviews recent espionage cases and interestingly describes (even if names, places, and dates are all missing) some of our own ventures, effective and ineffective, as well as at least one tragicomic episode. The reader will also be uncomfortably reminded of the peculiar failings of our last president and his entourage. It is not that the properly loyal author accuses Carter of anything at all. It is, rather, the sheer honesty of the book that inevitably exposes the incapacity, and some sneaky malevolence.

Intelligence aficionados, moreover, will glean new facts that survived the CIA's prolonged and strict vetting of Turner's text. Those concerned with the betterment of public administration in the realm of intelligence should not allow irritation with the author's polemic to obscure the merits of his organizational suggestions—except for one of his central notions. In Turner's view, the director of Central Intelligence, who should be a different person than the director of the CIA, should also be "depoliticized"—not the president's man, but a political neuter. But that would work only if the intelligence community is to serve as a purely contemplative body. As soon as action is undertaken, however, only an expressly "political" follower of the president can provide leadership, in correct reflection of the expressed political mandate that put his boss in the White House.

EDWARD N. LUTTWAK

Edward N. Luttwak is the author most recently of *The Pentagon and the Art of War: The Question of Military Reform* (Simon and Schuster/Institute for Contemporary Studies).

A NEW DEAL HERO

Harold Ickes of the New Deal by Graham White and John Maze

(Harvard University Press, 263 pp., $20)

The title of this book gives the reader hope that the authors will open a window on the idealism, the accomplishments, and the significance of the people who made up the Roosevelt administration. But that hope quickly dims. The book presents only a minuscule part of the story of the New Deal that transformed the stark capitalism of the 1920s into the welfare state of the 1930s. A crusade that brought stars to the eyes of so many who had the inimitable opportunity to participate in some small way in the greatest political venture of the 20th century loses all its luster in this telling.

I have so much admiration for those with the self-discipline to forsake daily routines and concentrate their lives on a subject of historical or sociological importance that I have never panned a book in my life. But historian Graham White and psychologist John Maze have managed to break the mold with a "psycho-biography" that is tedious in its psychological analysis and haphazard as historical biography.

In the notes he was preparing for his autobiography at the time of his death, Tom Corcoran wrote that Harold Ickes was "the most New Deal of all the New Dealers." Tom's partner, Ben Cohen, always had the same suggestion when the president or some other high administration official refused to lead a Corcoran-Cohen foray (against business greed or corruption, racists, Wendell Wilkie, Adolph Hitler): "Let's put it up to Harold; he never says no." My only meeting alone with Secretary Ickes was in 1935, when he interviewed me before I went on the Department of Interior's payroll to work for Ben Cohen. Few people I have ever talked to gave liberalism so much meaning in so short a time. For a great number of New Dealers, Ickes made the terms "knee-jerk liberal" and "bleeding heart" expressions of nobility. A book explaining the historical significance of this great man is still to be written, for Maze's psychology paralyzes White's history.

The authors have little difficulty documenting the unhappiness of Ickes's

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boyhood in Altoona, Pennsylvania—a wastrel father, a bullying older brother, a repressive mother who wouldn't let Harold whistle or read on Sundays but whom he nevertheless idolized. (At 13 he hid a pistol under his pillow, determined to kill his father if he once more assaulted his mother.) From this the authors argue that Ickes's "protective attitudes towards minorities can be traced in a continuous line back to his attempts to protect his exploited mother." Maybe so, but in spending their energies on why Ickes did something, the authors lose sight of the magnitude of what he did. Thus they mention, more or less in passing, that Interior Department contracts under Ickes regularly contained a clause that the contractors "were required to pay a certain percentage of their total wages bill to blacks." A reader, even one only moderately interested in civil rights, yearns for more details on this early expression of affirmative action. But the authors get themselves so worked up about why Ickes devoted himself to minority protection that they overlook the important fact that he was light-years ahead of his time on what remains, 50 years later, an issue of the first magnitude.

ON HIS mother's death, when Harold was 16, he was taken to live with an aunt in Chicago. Although an impoverished and not particularly happy young man, Ickes soon began distinguishing himself—senior class president at his high school, a big man on campus while working his way through the University of Chicago, a law degree cum laude in 1907. Yet the authors are quite stinting in their praise for these successes, referring to Ickes's "tendency to exaggerate the difficulties he faced in obtaining a college education," which represents for them "the playing out on a larger stage of his childhood role as a member of an embattled moral minority." It's just possible, of course, that here was an unusual combination of grit and brains.

Ickes soon became Chicago's "people's counsel," rivaling the role Louis Brandeis had played in Boston before his appointment to the Supreme Court in 1916. Ickes worked against juvenile delinquency and child labor, and for school reform and the Illinois ten-hour law. He defended workers' rights, particularly the Hart, Schaffner, and Marx strikers. He became president of the Chicago branch of the NAACP, championed the rights of Indians, and took the Jewish side in two highly charged civil liberties struggles. This intervention on behalf of the two persecuted Jews was totally consistent with Ickes's overall record right down through the days of the Holocaust. Yet the authors attribute the intervention to the fact that at the time "he, too, was an indigent outsider in one of the homes of the rich. . . ."

ALL THE while Ickes was also playing the underdog role of a Republican political reformer. He was a dyed-in-the-wool Teddy Roosevelt-Hiram Johnson Progressive on both the national and local scenes. His bellicose attitude toward Germany in World War I gives the authors a chance to state the book's underlying premise: "The question is not about the soundness of Ickes' view of Germany's aggressiveness, but of the source of his powerful feelings. . . ." This is the psychohistorical obsession that makes this book such a historical failure.

In this instance the authors find the why of Ickes's bellicosity in his "struggling to defend himself against his own conviction of being weak and pusillanimous in his relationship with Anna [his wife]," and in his "desperate need of repairing his self-esteem and feelings of potency." This constant harping upon Ickes's "underlying doubt of his male potency" and the unhappiness of life with Anna (he himself indicates he went into World War I in 1918 to get away from her and "fervently hoped he would never return") obscures the authors' account of his role as Chicago's Louis Brandeis and his transformation from Progressive Republican to FDR Democrat. Thus, for example, one will search the index in vain for a reference to Alfred E. Smith, the Democratic candidate against Hoover in 1928, or for a clue to what position Ickes took in that race.

At any rate, only four years later Ickes helped organize the Midwest Independent Republican vote for Roosevelt. After Hiram Johnson and Bronson Cutting declined the position of interior secretary, Ickes's campaign for the job proved successful. In his 13 years as secretary, during which he also served as Public Works administrator and petroleum coordinator, Ickes was not only the cabinet's foremost spokesman for liberal values, but he gave his immense energy and competence to the highly successful administration of those agencies. Ickes quite rightly prided himself on his scandal-free stewardship of the agencies over which he presided. As he worked assiduously himself, so he drove his staff mercilessly. Once he circulated a portion of *Alice in Wonderland* as a Public Works application and caught his top people napping.

The authors find more interest, however, in Ickes's unsuccessful turf battles with Harry Hopkins for control of relief works, and with Henry Wallace for control of the Forest Service. They seem to be poking fun at him for repeatedly resigning his positions (FDR always found an affectionate way to talk him out of quitting), but they never consider the importance of the political tactic of resignation as an instrument of pressure. If even half of the high Johnson administration officials who now claim that they had been against the Vietnam War had handed in their resignations to the president, the list of the dead on Washington's Vietnam Memorial would have been far shorter.

The authors make no effort, furthermore, to explain the contrast between the high-mindedness of Ickes's Interior Department and FDR's other New Deal agencies and the sleazy deportment of more recent administrations. Those who deeply believe in affirmative government as a noble calling for the benefit of all are very careful not to sully the venture in which they are participating. It is precisely when those who hold office denigrate government as part of the problem that the sleaze factor begins to take its toll.

Still, one can ask, why did Ickes risk possible scandal in a passionate extra-

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"YALE SOCIOLOGIST **Jonathan Rieder** believes the Democrats are losing followers on cultural issues. His soundings among Italians and Jews in the Canarsie section of Brooklyn (a long-time solid Democratic neighborhood) have found that they now associate liberalism with 'profligacy, spinelessness, malevolence, masochism, elitism, fantasy, anarchy, idealism, softness, irresponsibility, and sanctimoniousness.' (Wish we'd said that!)"

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marital love affair right after he came to office in the New Deal, and continue that liaison even after his wife's appearance on the Washington scene? For me, this is the most un-Ickes-like act of his lifetime. The authors suggest "that politics was for him in part a substitute sexual activity, one in which he felt more confident than in the actual physical encounter." Yet Ickes's most intense sexual encounter in the early days of the New Deal came at the very time of his most intense political activity.

As war clouds came in the late 1930s, Ickes quite naturally sought a piece of the action. He had been the first cabinet officer to denounce fascism, and in 1938 he even defied Roosevelt and Hull by refusing to sign a contract to sell helium to Germany. In 1939 he let FDR know he would like to be secretary of war. When that post didn't come his way, he sought the vice presidential nomination at the 1940 Democratic Convention. (Henry Wallace got it.) Here, too, the authors overlook the historical significance of what they are describing—how many American and Allied lives could have been saved in World War II had Ickes been successful in either attempt. For the period from Hitler's invasion of Poland in September 1939 to Pearl Harbor in December 1941 was a troubled and confusing one; American business was permitted to go its greedy way of building autos, refrigerators, radios, and other consumer goods, while Hitler's threat of world domination cried out for the conversion of our factories to planes, tanks, and all the munitions of war.

Ickes understood what was needed. Supporting a strong excess profit tax bill at a cabinet meeting in August 1940, Ickes argued that the administration should go ahead "even if it means new factories of our own and taking over old ones and running them ourselves." Brilliant anti-Hitler New Dealers—Ben Cohen, Oscar Cox, Wayne Coy, Abe Feller, Phil Graham, Ed Prichard, Bob Nathan, David Ginsburg, Edward Rhetts, to name only a few—were desperately seeking to break the bottlenecks holding up conversion to war production in the interest of getting aid to Britain and then to Russia, and to arm our own expanding forces. With a leader of Ickes's dynamism, conversion of American industry to war production would have been much further along when the inevitable war reached our shores.

In the end, White and Maze give a high assessment of Ickes's work: "He had restored the reputation of a great department and administered it better than any of his predecessors. He had attempted to protect the weak from their oppressors. He had fought tenaciously to conserve what remained of the nation's resources." In sorrow, and not in anger, I must suggest that the authors' (or at least Maze's) insistence on total psychological immersion has prevented them from demonstrating just how right their conclusions were.

JOSEPH L. RAUH JR.

Joseph L. Rauh Jr., who joined the New Deal in 1935, is a Washington lawyer.

THE IMPROLIFIC APPETITE

Byron and Greek Love: Homophobia in 19th-Century England by Louis Crompton

(University of California Press, 419 pp., $24.95)

The central subject of this book is declared in its subtitle rather than in its title. Homophobia (fear and hatred of homosexuals) played a particular role in English life. No executions for homosexual acts are recorded in Continental Europe after 1791, but the figures remained constant at about two a year in England for the three decades after 1806. Executions for every other capital offense declined dramatically. As for Byron's role, Louis Crompton admits in his introduction that his account of the poet is "overwhelmingly indebted" to the work of three predecessors (G. Wilson Knight, Leslie Marchand, and Doris Langley Moore); Crompton does not try to explain Byron's poetry by his sexuality. In fact, it is Crompton's account of a rather different figure—Jeremy Bentham—and his response to the homophobic current that distinguishes this book, successfully establishing a new and important context for old material.

Early 19th-century England dramatized its righteousness by projecting sexual irregularity onto the Continent, and particularly onto France. Homosexuality became, according to this version, a Catholic and anarchistic disposition. Public executions and pillories, which gave despised classes such as prostitutes the chance to vent their feelings on a perfectly defenseless victim, had a tonic and purgative effect on mobs that might otherwise have expressed their feeling with less consideration for the status quo. Acquitted defendants needed a bodyguard 30 or 40 strong to escape without injury. Men could die on the pillory (the prescribed punishment in the absence of proven penetration and emission), particularly if they made the mistake of being below average height, so that in effect they hanged. They stood a good chance, whatever their height, of having bones broken or an eye knocked out.

The mythical division of Europe into a Protestant woman-loving north and a degenerate Catholic south may seem antique as a notion, but Crompton points out that it supplied a basis for Nazi racial analysis, and thus contributed to extermination of homosexuals attempted by the Third Reich. Wealth and high birth, moreover, were no protection against antihomosexual feeling or legislation; the most notorious casualty of homophobia, driven to exile and ostracized, was the richest man in England, William Beckford.

In this time and this place, a bisexual poet became one of the most famous men in the world. What is surprising is not how little evidence has survived, but how much. In Byron the confessional urge and the need for self-preservation combined to produce a style of hinting mysteriousness that keeps its secrets suspended. Even those of his circle most obsessed with discretion (like John Cam Hobhouse, shown by this book fully to have shared Byron's sexual interests) kept documents if anything more dangerous than those they destroyed.

Crompton has the luxury, unusual

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for a gay scholar (and that throughout is his viewpoint), of downplaying much of the evidence and still producing a startling and authoritative picture. He corrects Harold Bloom's overcompensating description of Byron as "basically homosexual." Byron's interest in his own sex was confined to his late school days, university years, and early travels (up to 1811), with a brief reprise in the last six months of his life (1823-1824). His interests were, strictly speaking, pederastic, since his love-objects were all 15 when he became infatuated with them, though he was little more than 15 himself when he fell for John Edlestone at Cambridge, when Edlestone was a choirboy.

EDLESTONE'S death, of consumption, inspired the "Thyrza" lyrics that appeared in the *Childe Harold* volume. They established for Byron an acceptable persona as a grieving lover, whose controversial opinions on religion and politics could be regarded as distractions. Byron had opted to falsify the object of his affection rather than falsify the emotion itself. No other choice was open to a poet in his position. The contradiction of being feted, especially by women, for poems commemorating his love for a man, in a society that executed lovers of their own sex, was only the most extreme of those that attended him.

Louis Crompton ascribes to his bisexuality only an aggravating role in the formation of Byron's persona, but he cites enough evidence to suggest that it was of central importance. Byron's half-sister Augusta described to his wife a change in his temperament during his school days, and seems to have mentioned it to Byron himself at the time, to judge by a letter in which he admits to the change, but lists only causes not to be blamed for it. Byron's temperament, an excess of bitter melancholy surrounded by qualities of the most brilliant extroversion, would seem a plausible response to the discovery that a profound element in himself conflicted with a profound element of English law and public feeling, so that his worldly position (apart from anything else) would always be precarious.

When Byron came to reveal his irregular past, it was to Lady Caroline Lamb, a woman almost absurdly unsuited to the role of confidante. If she was unconventional enough to hear his confession without protest while they were lovers, she was also above any scruple in her use of the power he had given her. After their affair had ended, she invaded Byron's quarters in his absence and wrote in a book the message "Remember me!" Her choice of book, Beckford's *Vathek*, shows that she was reminding Byron of Beckford's fate as well as her own knowledge. Byron's wife may have stumbled on a similar weapon, if Wilson Knight is right in thinking that she found out from her lawyer that anal relations, even within marriage, were punishable by death. If being hanged in the morning concentrates the mind, then knowing that your estranged wife has the power of life or death over you must darken the persona wonderfully. Louis Crompton is skeptical about the possibility, and relegates it to a footnote.

Crompton treats with confidence notoriously tricky areas, like the relationship of romantic friendship to sexual love. He can afford to make out a moderate case, because his book aims for depth rather than novelty in its treatment of Byron. The chief source of that depth, and a cause for wonder in its own right, is the material on homophobia from the Jeremy Bentham archives held by University College, London. Bentham turns out to have been obsessed with hostile attitudes to homosexuality.

THERE IS no way of establishing whether Bentham had a personal stake in liberalizing attitudes, since at the time there was as much to fear from keeping an open mind, which amounted to an open invitation to dangerous gossip, as from being personally involved. Bentham's occasional panics prove nothing either way. In any case, his struggles with the issue gain from their stubbornly rational character and their freedom from sentimental appeals.

Bentham wrote 50 pages of notes in 1774, a longer formal essay in 1785, 200 more pages in 1814 and 1816, lengthy speculations on homosexuality and the Bible in 1818, and a final synopsis on sodomy law reform in 1824. Bentham's writings on the subject, here first fully explored and surely demanding separate publication, would amount to a substantial book, and that in an age when anything approaching erudition was itself, in this area, suspect.

There was plenty of contradiction in the laws to alert a jurist like Bentham. According to the naval statutes, it was a lesser offense to sell the secrets of the fleet than to encroach upon a sailor's chastity. The judges of the King's Bench ruled in 1779 that to extort money with accusations of homosexuality was equivalent to highway robbery at pistol point, a striking instance of one part of the legal system assessing another part (the sodomy laws) as being a weapon against which the citizen was defenseless.

STILL LESS as a philosopher, a utilitarian, and a hedonist could Bentham fathom the intensity of antihomosexual feeling. Although such feeling posed as a moral sentiment, it seemed to him to have nothing in common with the ascetic tradition (itself unappealing to Bentham), which in any case expressed contempt for pleasure, and not loathing. He was anxious to distinguish the teachings of Christ from the obsessions of Paul with which they had become encrusted. It appalled Bentham that a difference in taste could be turned into a principle of destruction, just as it had appalled him when a female relative had asked him to kill a toad simply because she found it ugly.

As his speculations gained momentum, he developed a formidable array of counterarguments. Even his least liberal proposal (intended as a sop to public opinion)—that the punishment for homosexual acts be banishment, but with a high standard of proof (two witnesses, neither of them a principal or an accessory)—compares favorably with the current dispensation in many countries. The publication of Malthus's essay on population in 1798, moreover, gave Bentham more ammunition. If overpopulation was a threat, then sexual acts that produced no children could gain immensely in prestige. According to utilitarian theory, sexual pleasure was in any case a good that could only be spent, not hoarded.

Bentham's theorizing was heretical from the first; there was no prospect of his finding refuge in a community of like-minded thinkers. This led to great nervous strain, and to moments of desperate doubt as well as desperate humor in his notes. Still, he was spared the compromise that becomes possible in a less evenly intolerant society.

Bentham, in fact, worked through much of what was to become the agenda of gay liberation. He dropped a hostile vocabulary in favor of a neutral one—his

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chosen phrase, capitalizing on the cachet of non-reproduction, being "the improlific appetite." He criticized as prejudicial the negative portrayals of homosexuals in fiction (Smollett, Fielding, Wieland, Cumberland). His project involved grasping nettle after nettle: he even tackled the issue of gay teachers (which is still controversial). He discounts as unlikely erotic involvements in ordinary schoolroom settings, but suggests that a private pupil might improve as a student if his tutor was attentive. If the boy took advantage of this situation, his parents should break off the affair.

This approximation to classical Greek practice is all the more remarkable in that Bentham was ignorant of Plato; English homophobic censorship had operated with great effectiveness. He could see the desperate shifts that were needed in conventional rhetoric to reconcile the high esteem in which the ancient world was held with the disgust aroused by some of its most representative practices, but he did not, like Shelley, read the *Symposium* in Greek. (Shelley, though, had his share of conventional feeling; he could not reconcile himself to anal intercourse among the Greeks, for reasons of discomfort and indignity, and preferred to think that their orgasms were spontaneous.)

Bentham's solitary project gives Louis Crompton's book the perfect counterweight to its hero. Byron loved and suffered, which in a sense anyone can do; and he equivocated. Bentham sat and wrote against the grain of his time. That two such opposed figures, an impulsive poet and a painstaking philosopher, should have been so deeply affected by the same hostile current gives *Byron and Greek Love* what such a book needs if it is not to be dismissed as special pleading: the guarantee that an authentically major issue has been rescued from the margins.

Madame de Staël suggested that her era should be called not the age of Byron but the age of Bentham. Byron himself was less impressed: when he was given a copy of Bentham's *Springs of Action*, he dashed it to the floor, saying, "What does the old fool know of springs of action—my ___ has more spring to it." This book proves him wrong.

ADAM MARS-JONES

Adam Mars-Jones is the author of a collection of short fiction, *Fabrications* (Knopf), and the editor of *Mae West Is Dead: Recent Lesbian and Gay Fiction* (Faber and Faber).

THE NEW REPUBLIC'S BEST BOOKS

Following is a list of books TNR *has recently reviewed and recommends.*

Lives of the Saints by Nancy Lemann (Knopf). Coming of age in a daze in New Orleans. (Reviewed 6/24/85)

Slow Homecoming by Peter Handke, translated by Ralph Manheim (Farrar, Straus & Giroux). Three metaphoric and metaphysical parables. (6/17/85)

Irving Babbitt: An Intellectual Study by Thomas E. Nevin (The University of North Carolina Press). An intellectual biography of humanism's stern champion. (6/17/85)

The Heavens and the Earth: A Political History of the Space Age by Walter A. McDougall (Basic). The story of the state, the scientists, and the exploitation of the galaxy. (6/3/85)

Acts of Will: The Life and Work of Otto Rank by E. James Lieberman M.D. (Free Press). Another chapter in the history of psychoanalysis. (5/20/85)

Women and Angels by Harold Brodkey (The Jewish Publication Society of America). Two ordinary fragments of a long-awaited novel, and a third remarkable one: the portrait of a revelation. (5/20/85)

Mountbatten: A Biography by Philip Ziegler (Knopf). The aristocrat as ambitious, accomplished statesman. (5/13/85)

The Call: An American Missionary in China by John Hersey (Knopf). An unsentimental saga of one Christian's half-century in China. (5/13/85)

The Kindness of Strangers: The Life of Tennessee Williams by Donald Spoto (Little, Brown). A thorough life of the carousing playwright. (5/13/85)

Home Truths: Sixteen Stories by Mavis Gallant (Random House). Portraits of Canadians at home and abroad. (5/13/85)

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of "humanitarian" aid for a guerrilla fighting force, it's the Democrats' acquiescence in the charade. But the problem isn't "second-term blues." The people and Reagan simply disagree.

Then there's South Africa. Over White House objections, Congress is going to vote some kind of economic sanctions against the apartheid regime. On this issue, Reagan has unwittingly moved the country to the left. An honorable case can be made against sanctions on the grounds that they hurt the very people they're designed to help. But the administration has poisoned that position, first, by piously imposing sanctions on Nicaragua, and second, by its utterly unconvincing "constructive engagement" policy toward South Africa. There are going to be sanctions, not because Reagan has run his last political race, but because most Americans object to apartheid more than the president apparently does.

Reagan's recent appointee troubles reflect two different kinds of hubris. First, there's the hubris—and contempt for government—of an administration that thinks it can give important positions to extremist kooks and lightweights like Eileen Gardner (the one who wrote that the handicapped have "summoned" their disabilities) and Marianne Hall (coauthor of the book that discussed blacks and their "jungle freedoms"). Then there's the hubris of a Donald Devine, who recently gave up trying to be reappointed as head of the civil service. When Devine's first term as director expired in March, he appointed himself executive assistant to the director and signed an order giving the executive assistant all the director's powers. That is the action of a man who thinks he's been anointed, an attitude Devine may well have picked up from his administration colleagues.

It's often said by conservatives that liberals in Washington suffer from an "inside the Beltway" mentality, and have no idea what people are thinking in the rest of the country. Since November, it's the conservatives who've been living in an "inside the Beltway" dreamworld. They've become convinced that everybody except a few cranks and journalists shares the politics of the White House Mess and the Heritage Foundation. Actually, a lot of liberals have come to suspect the same thing. Slowly, though, the spell is breaking.

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CAMBRIDGE DIARIST

Old Habits

IN THIS SPACE a few weeks ago I published some words critical of Peter Jennings, the anchorman for ABC's "World News Tonight." My views provoked a good deal of mail in Jennings's defense—but none of it from ordinary TV-watching citizens. The responses came instead from what might loosely be called the journalists' mutual aid society, the cohort of reporters and news executives that sees every comment on the mediocrity or bias of one of the guild as a threat to all. But there also came in the mail two letters telling me of an interview Jennings had given to *The Journal of Palestine Studies*, which was reprinted in *Split Vision: The Portrayal of Arabs in the American Media* by Edmund Ghareeb. Like those other ideological recalcitrants who refer to Peiping (rather than Peking or Beijing) or Rhodesia (rather than Zimbabwe), Jennings slips easily into talking about Palestine, as if that territory were not now a jurisdiction covered by Jordan and Israel. Knowing this, you won't be surprised to know that Jennings worries about the pro-Israel tilt of his colleagues. And, of course, he's also worried that those journalists known as pro-Arab, or who are critical of Israel, should not be thought of as anti-Semitic. Still, Jennings thinks the one category of reporter most suspect in the area is Jewish reporters. "It is unfortunate that we do assign Jews to work in Israel . . . I am against having a Jewish or Israeli correspondent serving ABC in Israel." On the distinction between being anti-Semitic and *merely* anti-Israel, however, note Jennings's own equation of Jews and Israelis. More to the point is his casting of doubt on the journalistic objectivity of all Jews—Israeli, American, whatever. Who has written from the area with a more fiercely maintained objectivity than Thomas Friedman of *The New York Times*? Did the Begin government have a more relentless scrutinizer than Eric Silver of *The Manchester Guardian*? Jennings covered his ass by saying that he also wouldn't have "an Egyptian correspondent serving ABC in Egypt." But this insults the Arab journalists who, in far more threatening circumstances, have pledged themselves to the vocation of the facts: Ihsan A. Hijazi, a Palestinian now writing for the *Times* from Beirut; Tewfik Mishlawi of *The Wall Street Journal* and Youssef Ibrahim, whose writings on OPEC have won him exclusion from gatherings of the oil producers, one of the milder punishments meted out to errant journalists in the Arab world.

THE JUNE 7 ISSUE of *The Economist* points out the "peril of telling the truth" in Lebanon. This is a matter on which the European press has been far more candid than our own. It was not until long after American reporters were routinely filing their Lebanon stories from Cyprus that the BBC finally pulled out its three correspondents and a technical team from Beirut. The "difficulty of reporting truthfully" was simply too great. These days, *The Economist* notes, "those traditional rivals, the international news agencies, have been consulting each other before putting out figures of casualties, on which the Shiites are particularly sensitive." (This makes the vividness of Hijazi's reportage all the more notable.) The British newsweekly argues that because of the journalists' understandable fear of being kidnapped or killed, the full story of what happened in Beirut these last weeks will have been successfully suppressed. This fear has worked the same way before, but in the U.S. at least, it has been a taboo subject. Maybe Peter Jennings will take it up.

AS THE SPRING TERM wound down I spent a morning at the Harvard Law School discussing McCarthyism and Communism. I tried there to establish the proposition that some things were true even though mean-spirited folk like Joseph McCarthy and J. Edgar Hoover believed them. Alas, the most lasting legacy of McCarthyism turns out to be the impediment to telling the truth about the relationship between American Communists and fellow travelers and the Soviet Union, a relationship that can accurately be characterized as one of eager servant to cruel master. Now an old argument, enjoying revival in the writings of some New Left intellectuals, denies this subservience. These intellectuals have found in the era of the Popular Front an ideal, a fleeting moment when party and movement together stirred millions. But it was nothing more than a moment. As Irving Howe and Lewis Coser pointed out in their authoritative *The American Communist Party* (1957), "The quest for justice became indistinguishable from loyalty to a profoundly unjust system of totalitarian domination." Theodore Draper, the meticulous author of *The Roots of American Communism* (1957) and *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), has in two important essays in *The New York Review of Books* (May 9 and May 30) tried to retrieve the radical history in America from its rhapsodists. Sean Wilentz, a professor at Princeton, has responded to Draper with a piece in the June 11 issue of *The Village Voice*. Here's something representative of its tone: "Draper is no Reaganite—far from it. . . . Nor should anyone fault him on the specious grounds that by criticizing left scholarship he abets the right." So far so good, no? Well, Wilentz continues, "Draper's problem is his dishonesty; by ignoring the right-wing assault, he further distorts the new historians' political situation. And the worst may not be over. Vintage Books is planning a new edition of *American Communism and Soviet Russia* with a revised version of his *NYRB* piece as an epilogue—thereby lending it additional respectability and further poisoning the air." Now, in this paragraph we meet old and ugly habits of mind. The last sentence with its unclear "it" indicts Draper for daring to reprint his essay. As for the political situation of these left historians, Wilentz asserts that their academic freedom is in peril, that they are vulnerable targets of a New Right "crusade to extirpate left and liberal criticism" of American history and society. I do not think this accurately characterizes the situation in the professoriat; rather, the evocation of a new McCarthyism seems to be a case of subpoena envy. But even if the "political situation" of the left historians were precarious, it does not follow that whatever they write is correct. Communists and fellow travelers were victims in the McCarthy period, but victimization is not coterminous with virtue—now or then.

M.P.

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Dwight Knott, Sun Company manager of the Big Horn Ranch and Reclamation Research Center.

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